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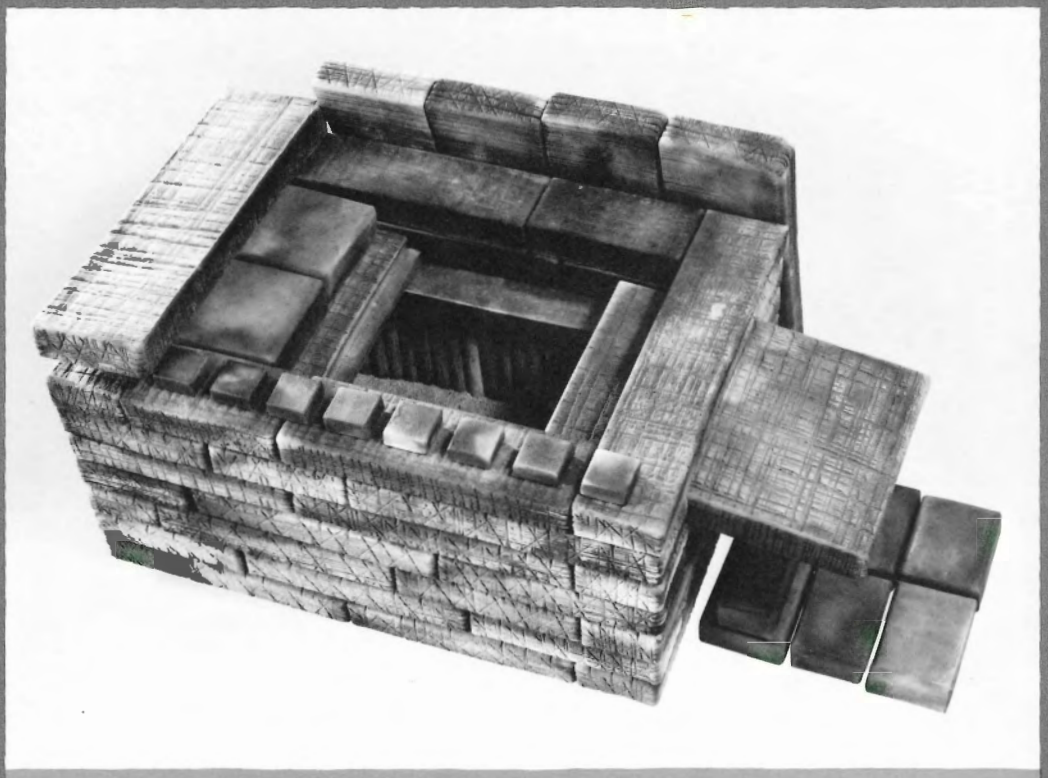

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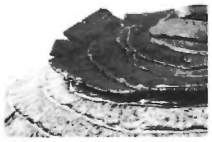
(Cover) Detail Untitled *(1982) by Arnold Zimmerman, 7' (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*



Robert C. Morgan — ***Mythical Habitats: J. B. Cobb*** *Page 12.*

PROFILE

Ellen Priest — ***Arnold Zimmerman*** *Page 18.*

Joanne Burstein — ***The Travels of John Roloff*** *Page 26.*

CHRONICLE

Matthew Kangas — ***Tablets of Earth*** *Page 34.*

Michael G. Rubin — ***Kenneth Ferguson*** *Page 42.*

EXHIBITIONS

Sarah Bodine — ***Ralph Bacerra*** *Page 48.*

Edward Lebow — ***Walter Darby Bannard*** *Page 50.*

Joanne Burstein — ***Robert Brady*** *Page 52.*

Joanne Burstein — ***Tony Costanzo*** *Page 54.*

Meg Cox — ***Dorothy Hafner*** *Page 56.*

Joanne Burstein — ***Lyn Haxton*** *Page 58.*

Janet Koplos — ***Jun Kaneko*** *Page 60.*

Louise Klemperer — ***Geoffrey Pagen*** *Page 62.*

Ed Forde — ***Adrian Saxe*** *Page 64.*

Martha Keller — ***John Stephenson*** *Page 66.*

C E R A M I C

E C H O E S

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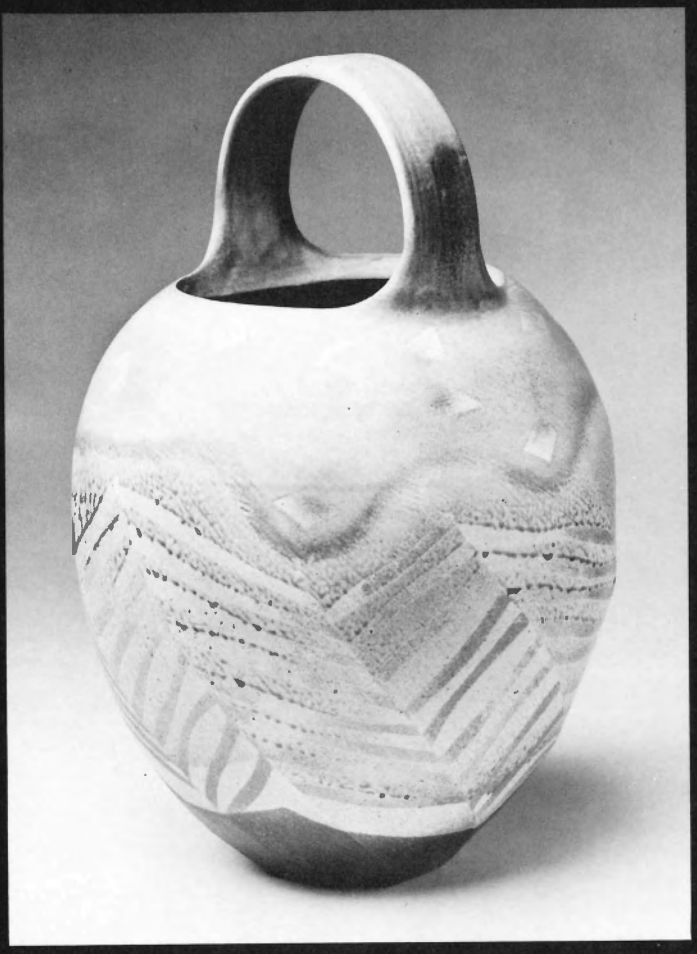

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Mythical Habitats: J.B. Cobb

Robert C. Morgan

Jim Cobb began working as a potter in the early 1960s while attending the University of California at Berkeley as a student of Peter Voulkos. Upon graduation, he served in the U.S. Army, then moved to Santa Barbara in 1967. It was at the University of California, Santa Barbara, that Cobb began taking graduate studio courses in art while reviving his interest in the ceramic vessel. At the outset, most of these vessels were nominally functional and traditional in appearance. But by the following year, there was evidence that Cobb was moving away from utility and gradually evolving toward more formal, three-dimensional concerns. In other words, he was beginning to think in terms of interior volume as well as exterior shape. He became interested in how the interior of a vessel might become *known* to the viewer. To accomplish this, he occasionally cut elongated vertical slits and other openings into his vessels, thereby declaring them nonutilitarian.

In the spring of 1968, Cobb was introduced to the work of New York sculptor David von Schlegel, who had come to the University as a visiting lecturer. Von Schlegel hired Cobb to assist in building a large-scale sculpture, an experience that augmented Cobb's awareness of what sculpture could be. Von Schlegel further recommended that the young artist, then in his late twenties, move to New York City. Cobb took the sculptor's advice. Within a year, he and his family were living in Brooklyn Heights.[1] While attending Hunter College as a masters student, Cobb began work on a thesis dealing with the geometric paintings of the classical Mimbres potters of the Southwestern United States.[2] Concurrently, he assisted the sculptors Robert Morris and Tony Smith, for whom he worked intermittently over a five-year period. In addition, he joined the Hunter faculty and later taught at Yale and Princeton.

Over the past fifteen years, Cobb has maintained an interest in two discrete yet interrelated areas: the primitive metaphysics of ceramic art and the concerns of perception, time, and structure, which he manifests in his large-scale cubic constructions. There are conceptual links between the two, but to my knowledge, Cobb has never tried to force a connection where it didn't belong.

His interest in the linguistic and philosophical orientations of Minimalism played a seminal role in his development as a sculptor. Initially, he would construct cubic habitats of corregated cardboard and pressboard, occasionally using super-8 film-loops and closed-circuit video playback systems. Cobb referred to these works as "Time Structures" because he believed that the perception of sculptural form had more to do with our experience of time than of space.

For Cobb, spatial-temporal awareness dominates our perception of three-dimensional form. Although his sculptural vocabulary was clearly derived from Minimalism, art history, and Palladian architecture, Cobb's vision is also derived from other more primitive sources, namely the cosmology of the Mimbres potters and painters. In a large exhibition at 112 Greene Street in May 1975, he presented numerous habitats that he constructed to emphasize his phenomenological orientation to sculpture.[3] Although the exhibition did not include works in clay, these works evolved in theory from formal concerns that had a cosmological, spiritual, and practical basis in pottery.

Building geometric boxes as arbitrary habitats the viewer could enter either physically or perceptually created a dualism that confounded Cobb's work from the outset. During the summer of 1972, when Cobb again visited Santa Barbara, the resolution of this duality began to

Untitled *(1982). Photo: Bror Karlsson.*

Untitled *(1975). Photo Bror Karlsson.*

evolve as a series of nonutilitarian hut-shaped vessels. The base of each of these small huts was the base and four sides of a cube, which had been cut from clay slabs and pulled up. The top consisted of a spiral roof coiled from the upper edges of the square slabs and encircling upward in a conical progression. The top of the dome was left open and "windows" were cut into the quadrants below.

For the antecedents of these vessels, one need only refer to the primitive huts built in an area of southern Italy known as the Murgia of the Trulli. Pictured in *Stone Shelters,* by Edward Allen, is a house constructed near the town of Laureto that comes especially close to serving as a prototype for Cobb's 1972 clay habitats.[4] One should note, however, that the conical roofs of these dwellings are much more severe than those of Cobb's habitats; also the base of the Laureto house is not cubic in construction. Another series of prototypes may be seen in Bernard Rudofsky's book, *Architecture Without Architects,* originally an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.[5] Rudofsky shows examples of primitive African huts (such as the dwelling within the trunk of the baobab tree), the Iberian stone granaries, African storehouses (which have a close structural resemblance to Cobb's work, not simply a morphological one), and the caravansarai of Iran.[6] Unfortunately, all of Cobb's early clay works from 1972 were destroyed in an accident. According to the artist's description, they were conceptually close to his cardboard and pressboard "Time Structures," but having the primitive ambiance of white-glazed stoneware.[7]

This ability to shift from a primitive to a classical mode of architecture, as evidenced in Cobb's work, has antecedents in the Pre-Socratic Greeks, particularly in the work of Pythagorus, whose "golden section" could be applied equally as well to civic buildings, such as the Parthenon, or to the most incidental stone cottages on the islands of the Aegean.

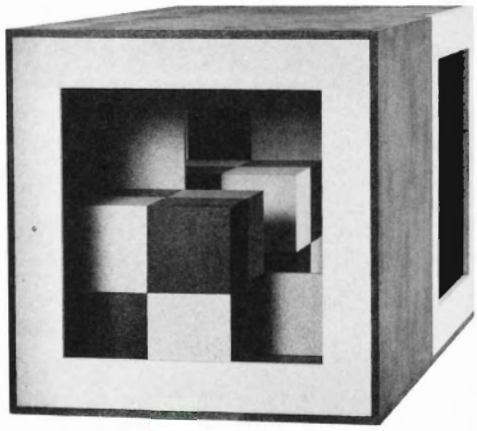
In 1975, the artist revived his earlier hut motif in a group of stonewares. Judging from the artist's description of the 1972 habitats, these 1975 works incorporate certain refinements and modulations of his basic structure. In the 1975 pieces, the base is no longer a quadrant, but a five-part asterisk pulled upward to the coil, which allows for greater strength in holding the coiled dome in place. In one work, the coiled roof has been pinched outward in three equidistant locations—the base, the middle, and the top ridge near the round opening. These flared ridges add a new dimension of grace and contrast to the form. In comparison, the morphology of other works adheres to the earlier motif; however, it differs from the first habitats in having no white glaze, no openings, an an asterisk instead of a quadrant base.

The recent series of earthenware habitats are all from 1982. Cobb has refined and stylized three basic permutations. One is a low structure, built on an asterisk, and incorporating a pinched, flared roof. Another uses a slab construction for the roof, instead of a coil. The overhang is pinched, but not flared. Yet another habitat is the more traditional in terms of the prototypes described by Rudofsky and Allen, yet in some ways the refinements in scale and proportion are the most pleasing to view.

There is a consistency of elements in both Cobb's vessel/habitats and in his more geometric architectonic configurations. The connection, once again, is not morphological, but conceptual. In *Window Boxes* (1976), for example, two cubic containers adhere tangentially to one another so that they are interconnected and extend outward from the wall at eye level. The viewer may peer into these constructions from either the front right

Untitled *(1982). Photo: Bror Karlsson.*

Window Box *(1976), pressboard and mixed media. Photo: Bror Karlsson.*



side or the left side. From either viewpoint, there is an aspect of contingency to the space of the adjacent cube; that is, one understands the cube to be there, but it is not completely accessible given the established square portals from which one is allowed to peer through *at different time intervals.*

It is this experience of time/space in relation to the behavioral action of perceiving the habitat that Cobb is concerned with. His thinking comes very close to the "primacy of perception" theory advocated by French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, who believed that in order to see anything in its entirety, it is necessary to become aware of one's own human, physical presence in relation to what one sees.[8] The geometry of Cobb's *Window Boxes,* perhaps, clarifies this idea more literally than do the clay habitats. Even so, the recent earthenware pieces in particular carry a certain metaphorical poignancy, a desire to penetrate within the volume of what one knows to be there but cannot quite see. In other words, the viewer allows the fictional and mythical space of the inner volume to function as an arbitrary habitat, a probable space in which one might choose to dwell.

In closing, let me add two parenthetic notes about the work of J. B. Cobb. Although he teaches ceramics and perpetually thinks in terms of metaphysical structures, he is not always doing ceramics or building structures. Cobb's relation to his work is similar to that of Marcel Duchamp in his choice of Readymades. When something hit his retina in the proper light, so to speak, Duchamp would select that object, remove it from its normal context, and conquer its meaning for himself—a selection process that critic Octavio Paz refers to as a kind of rendezvous, an erotic event in which the eye makes contact with its object of desire.[9] Cobb limits his production of clay work according to when he feels that he has something to say. He is a ceramic artist in an underground sense, and in this respect his attitude is very close to that of Duchamp.

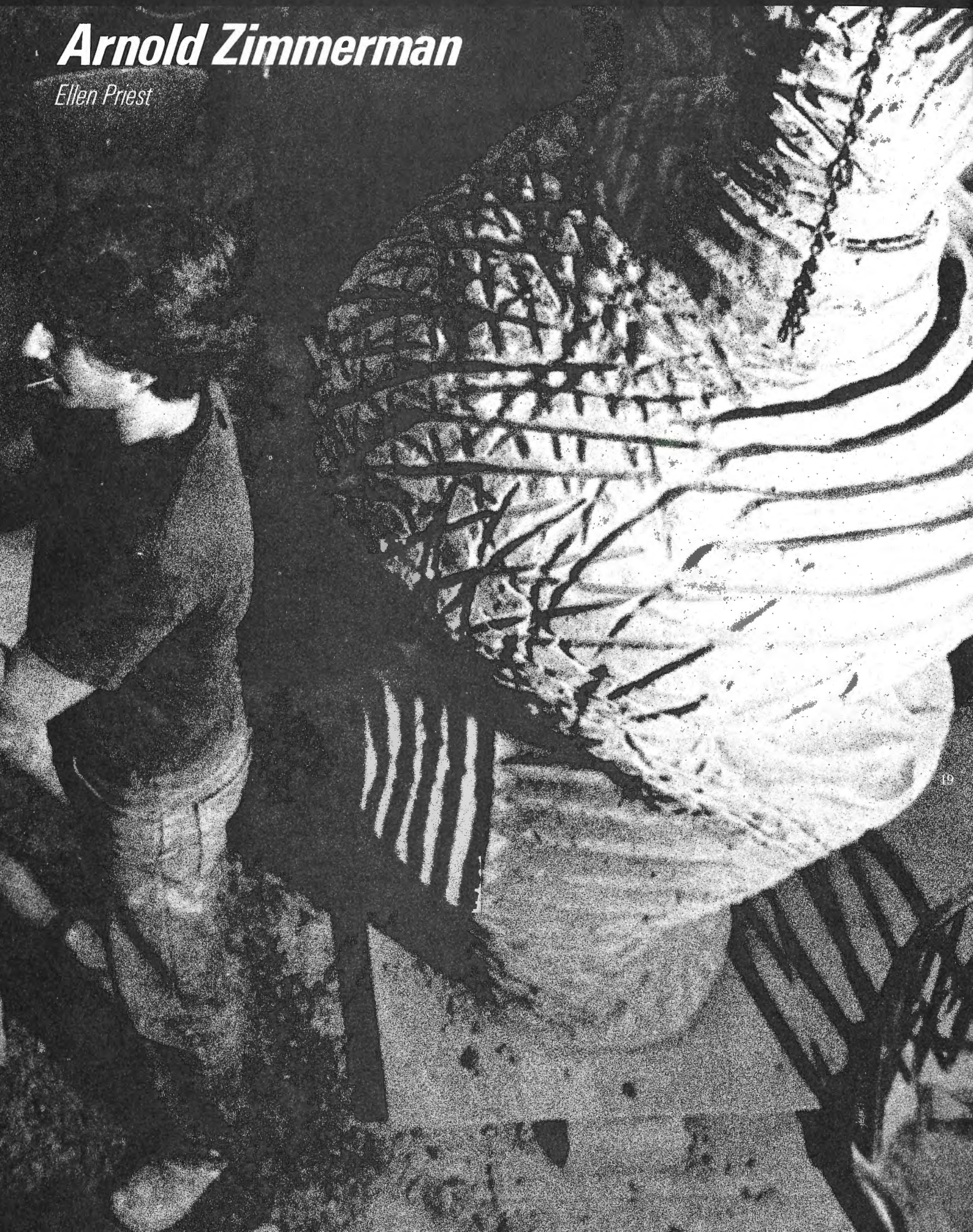
Secondly, Cobb's habitats are a good argument in favor of the vessel transformed into art. The transformation is not an ephemeral or ancillary one, but a conceptual one. It seems to me that too much ceramic art is being rationalized as art simply because it plays upon some concept of ornamentation or decorative attitude toward structure. It is refreshing to see work such as Cobb's, in which the basis of thought and feeling is not decorative or ornamental, but delivers the very force of being inside itself—that precious *élan vital.*

1. The artist has resided in Manhattan since 1971.
2. James B. Cobb, "Mimbres Painting and Decoration," Masters Thesis, CUNY, Hunter College, 1972.
3. J. B. Cobb, "Time Structures," 112 Greene Street, May 1975. The poster which Cobb designed to accompany the exhibition gives an explanation of the various categories of perception in time.
4. Edward Allen, *Stone Shelters,* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969.
5. Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects,* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964 (originally published by the Museum of Modern Art).
6. Each of these examples is illustrated within the Rudofsky book.
7. Conversation with the artist in his loft, New York City (March 12, 1983).
8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964. The best and most concise statement dealing with this aspect of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is in "An Unpublished Text," Translated by Arleen B. Dallery, pp. 3-11.
9. Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp,* New York: The Viking Press, 1977.

Robert C. Morgan is an intermedia artist, critic, and art historian; he is assistant professor of art history at Rochester Institute of Technology. *Copyright 1983 Robert C. Morgan.*

Arnold Zimmerman

Ellen Priest



Arnold Zimmerman builds his massive pots in two long rows in his studio. The pieces are set so close that at times Zimmerman can barely fit between to carve and mold them. Perhaps that is how he initially sets up the brash energy that carries through to the finished forms.

Standing eight to ten feet tall in raw clay, these vases shadow and reach for each other—bulging, twisting, towering. Behind them, drawings of their earliest states are tacked to shelves holding smaller pots. Each vase seems to be trying to influence all the others, but their raucous competition only acts to strengthen the uniqueness of each.

These pots embrace contrasts: between ancient and modern, between intellectual and mundane, between visual and physical, even between mortal and immortal. Their rough monumentality evokes Romanesque buildings, their forms call up ancient stone vessels, and their surface treatment is reminiscent of the reliefs and mosaics in early churches and monasteries. Yet at the same time, one senses the clear compositional influence of Analytical Cubism in the surface carvings—a series of facets that play both figure and ground, flattening the surface into a picture plane until it rounds the corner at the edge of the piece. And subject matter—images of vases, figures, columns, for example—is handled expressionistically, much as did the American "gesture" painters of the 1940s. Rather than jarring against each other, contrasts such as these deepen the work, making Zimmerman's pots richly referential and more permanent.

This artist's style is best described by the vases' three most important characteristics. First, the work is overwhelmingly physical. Larger than life-size, the pots stand seven to nine feet when finished. They weigh roughly a thousand pounds, and are constructed of three- to five-inch-thick walls of coarse stoneware clay. Where they bulge, they bulge a foot. Where they twist, they almost become disjointed. Where they are carved, the relief is cut deep. They ask to be felt, pushed on, leaned against. In short, their physical character asserts itself so boldly that the viewer feels an equally physical response.

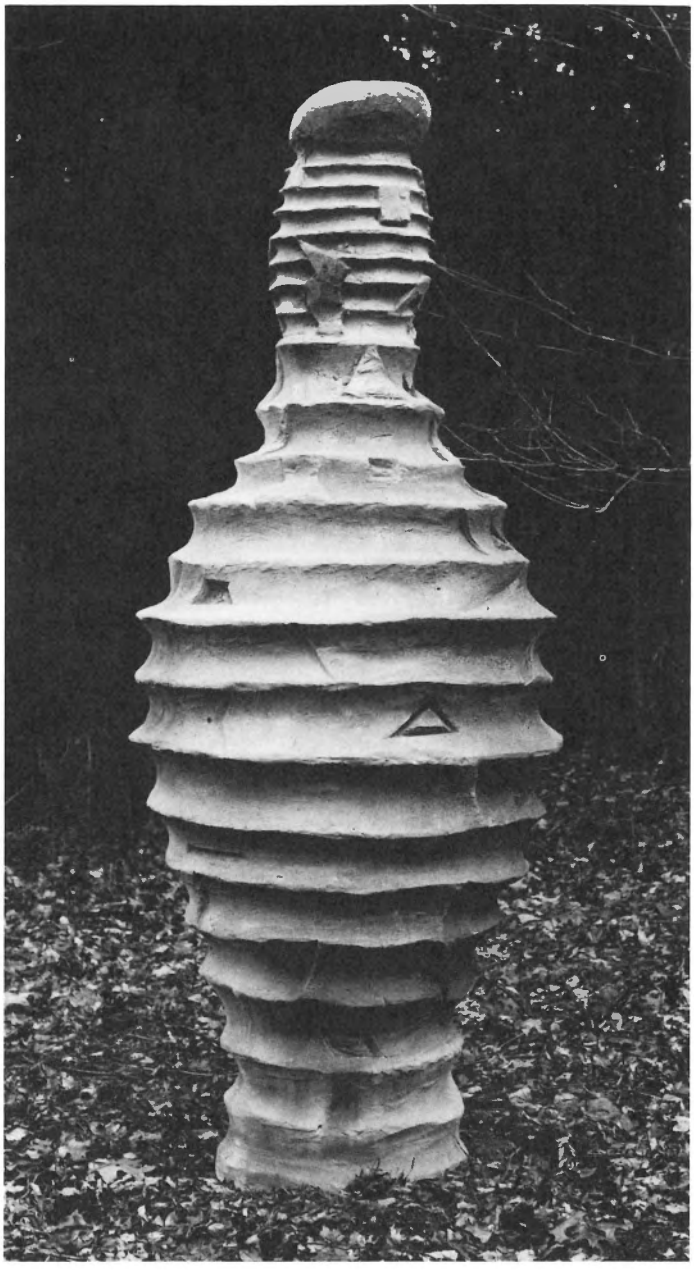
For many years Zimmerman has taken much of his inspiration from Romanesque architecture, particularly the cathedrals of north-central Italy. He describes visiting them with his mind full of all the analytical and historical facts he had learned in art school. But as he wandered through, their immediacy and presence took over. The sheer massiveness of every aspect of those churches towered over and yet lifted the spirit, creating an almost physical hope and heightened humanness. In their own milieu, Zimmerman's current pots capture the monumental quality of those churches. As one studies the vases, their deceptively simple, rough appearance gives way; the longer one looks, the more their subtly controlled proportions cause them to swell and become more massive. The stonelike clay almost seems to breathe and take on personality. Their physicality is inviting, confrontational, ennobling.

The second key feature of Zimmerman's work is the rhythmic quality of both the surface treatment and the overall shapes of the sculptures. Describing his as a rhythmic style obviously means that certain shapes are repeated or echoed across each piece. But the echoing reveals so many surprises that the viewer is not always aware of its impact. For example, on the largest squarish vase with half-exposed columns running up each side, a number of geometric shapes are repeated and twisted across its surface and through its structure. One-inch triangles and squares are cut deeply into the neck, equidistant from each other; then some of the same shapes are carved out of the columns; triangular zig-zags punctuate the neck; and horizontal bars are cut into the shoulder area. Columns bulge and recede at regular intervals around the piece. The viewer has a sense of these rhythms almost flickering, as each shape is echoed by another slightly different one elsewhere on the pot.

A more subtle example, however, is found in a curved vase on which Zimmerman has cut deep, evenly spaced parallel grooves that run vertically down each side of the piece. As the piece itself curves the grooves follow the change of angle to form concentric ovals as they approach the back. On the sculpture's front and neck, they appear as inverted V's. Set off by the linear grooves, the surface rhythms echo the form of the piece itself, so that surface and profile constantly refer to each other.

Beyond making the pots "move" visually, the nuanced and asymmetrical rhythms lend an organic, even human, quality to Zimmerman's work. Many forms in nature are roughly symmetrical, yet nuanced; so is the movement of many animals, including humans. The visual movement of Zimmerman's pieces is thereby familiar and accessible, contrasting to some degree the effect of their massiveness.

Certain of the Tuscan Romanesque cathedrals that Zimmerman admires exhibit the same phenomenon. On San Michele in Lucca, a tier of exterior columns supports each story of the building. Running in long, regular rows around each story, the columns themselves are deeply carved with rhythmic patterns, such as parallel diagonal lines that cause a barber-pole effect. The structure of the church and the spacing of columns are symmetrical and set up multiple rhythms on certain portions of the church's "surface." But the carving on each column is unique; none quite repeats any other. The tremendous variety of textures and patterns on these smaller elements is enough to make the building seem more organic and human.

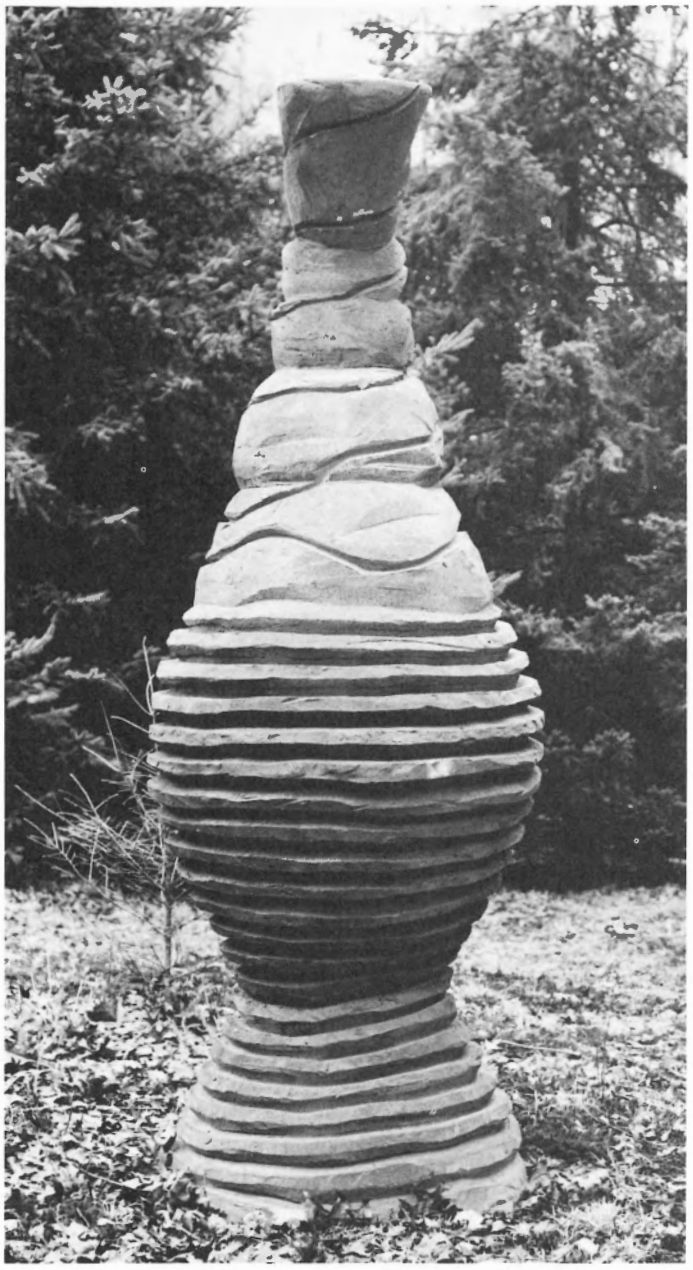


Previous spread: Arnold Zimmerman in his studio. Photo: Jack Harriet.

Plate *(1982), 23" (57.5 cm) diameter. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Untitled *sculpture (1982), 7' (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Untitled *sculpture (1982), 7' (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*



Untitled *sculpture (1982), 7′ (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Untitled *sculpture (1982), 7′ (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Vase *(1982), 34″ (85 cm) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Finally, Zimmerman's oversized vases play directly on the human figure—its proportions, its movements, its grace and awkwardness—and this is the third stylistic feature of his work. Most of this series seem quite female. The "women" vases either stand upright and still, with their greatest fullness at the hip, or they curve and shift in complex S-curves, as if in a half-humorous, half-sensual dance. Others, particularly a huge square pot, seem erect, formal, and male. Whatever their gender, all have figurelike proportions; the body of each is of a height and bulk in relation to its overall size that mimics the human torso and legs. At the shoulder, each curves into a narrower neck and widens into the base of a head. And perhaps most importantly, each time the artist has shifted the form's direction or weight upward, he has done so at a point where the human form, too, could twist or shift. These pieces have sexual personalities defined by Zimmerman's male perspective. The female pieces posture seductively, or stand with the elegant fullness of fertility figures. A tall, bulbous figure with four "arms" supporting the neck could be either a woman balancing a basket on her head, her position heightening the sensual curves of her body, or a highly adorned phallus offered for a woman's sexual pleasure. The male figures—the square pot and the "Balzac"-like figure with the deep-cut grooves—are straighter, more immobile. Their forms express in physical, rhythmic imagery the artist's candid pleasure in sensuality and sexuality.

Although clearly at the heart of Zimmerman's art, these feelings are not expressed with heavy-handed seriousness. The slight awkwardness of this much mass and roughness lends humor to the work, as do certain of the surprises and asymmetries. They recall body movements that are out of control, falling, comic; or they poke fun by exaggeration. One of the female vases shifts her hips, waist, and chest in a way that no dancer could hold for more than a moment without multiple dislocations; yet here she stands, permanently swinging her hips. In another, a group of carved squares tilt and penetrate the surface at such odd angles that they seem like irreverent troublemakers on an otherwise well-behaved pot. By playing our expectations and familiar experiences against the actual forms, Zimmerman uses a kind of free-wheeling physical absurdity to evoke lightheartedness, even laughter, and opens the viewer to the real dynamics of the work.

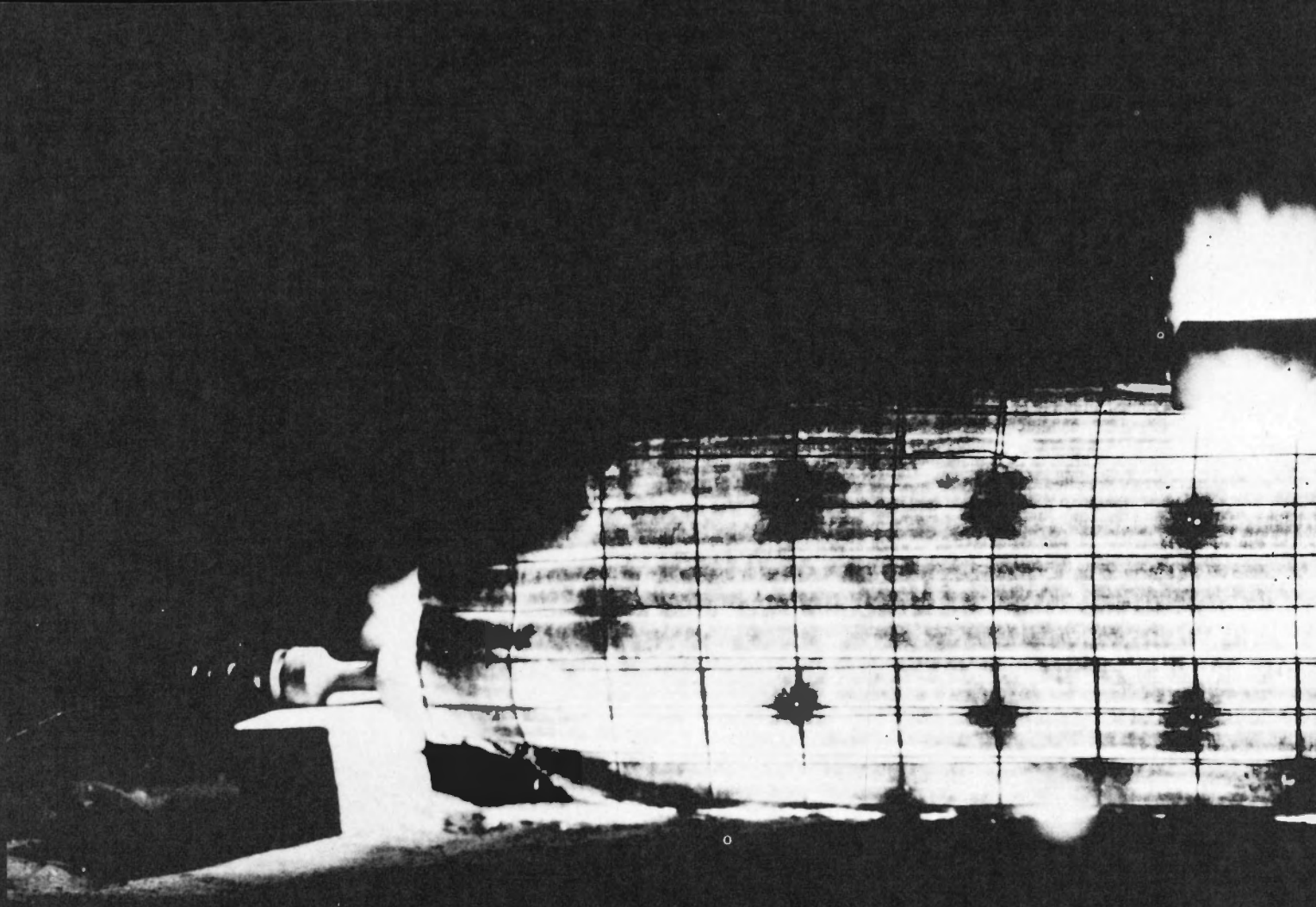
A very specific pattern begins when the viewer is confronted with one of Zimmerman's massive vases. The eye is first attracted and intrigued by energetic surface details, by the bold lines, rough textures, and unusual "glyphs" that run up the piece. Although the eye is meant to wander, quickly picking up rhythms and symmetries across the surface, the artist exercises tremendous control over the general direction in which it moves. For example, lines are often carved at angles that facilitate upward and hinder downward travel. The eye naturally follows the profile and skin of the pot from foot to shoulder, curving in at the neck and up to the opening of the vase at the top.

Then a very distinct change occurs: the neck and opening of each vase are constructed or carved to turn the viewer's eye strongly downward, back onto the shoulder of the piece. There is almost a thud in some cases, as if one's attention has been picked up and thrown down hard. Gravity aids this effect, with the horizontal shoulder area abruptly breaking the drop. At this moment, the way is opened for the pot's massive physical presence to assert itself. The shoulder seems to swell as surface and detail give way to bulging walls and shifting weight. Slowly the pieces come alive with richly figurative gesture, becoming more immediate and human. At the same time, they tower over the viewer even more, appearing stony, monumental, even architectural. These two opposite effects both derive from the work's physicality; each enhances the other by contrast.

Zimmerman's work comes on with a gutsy, humorous absorption in all that is human and physical. The fact that "man" is made out of "dust," like his pots, is for him a source of challenge and vitality, not a cause for disappointment. Rather than bemoaning mortality, his work suggests that one revel in it, taking both the blows and the breakthroughs as part of the rich, undulating movement that is life itself. Yet mortality, says his work, points beyond itself to immortality; the physical points to the intangible; the "dust" of the clay is fired into vessels that weather thousands of years. With a firm, intuitive hand, Zimmerman has built his pots to embody paradoxes of human experience. This complexity is the real source of their strength.

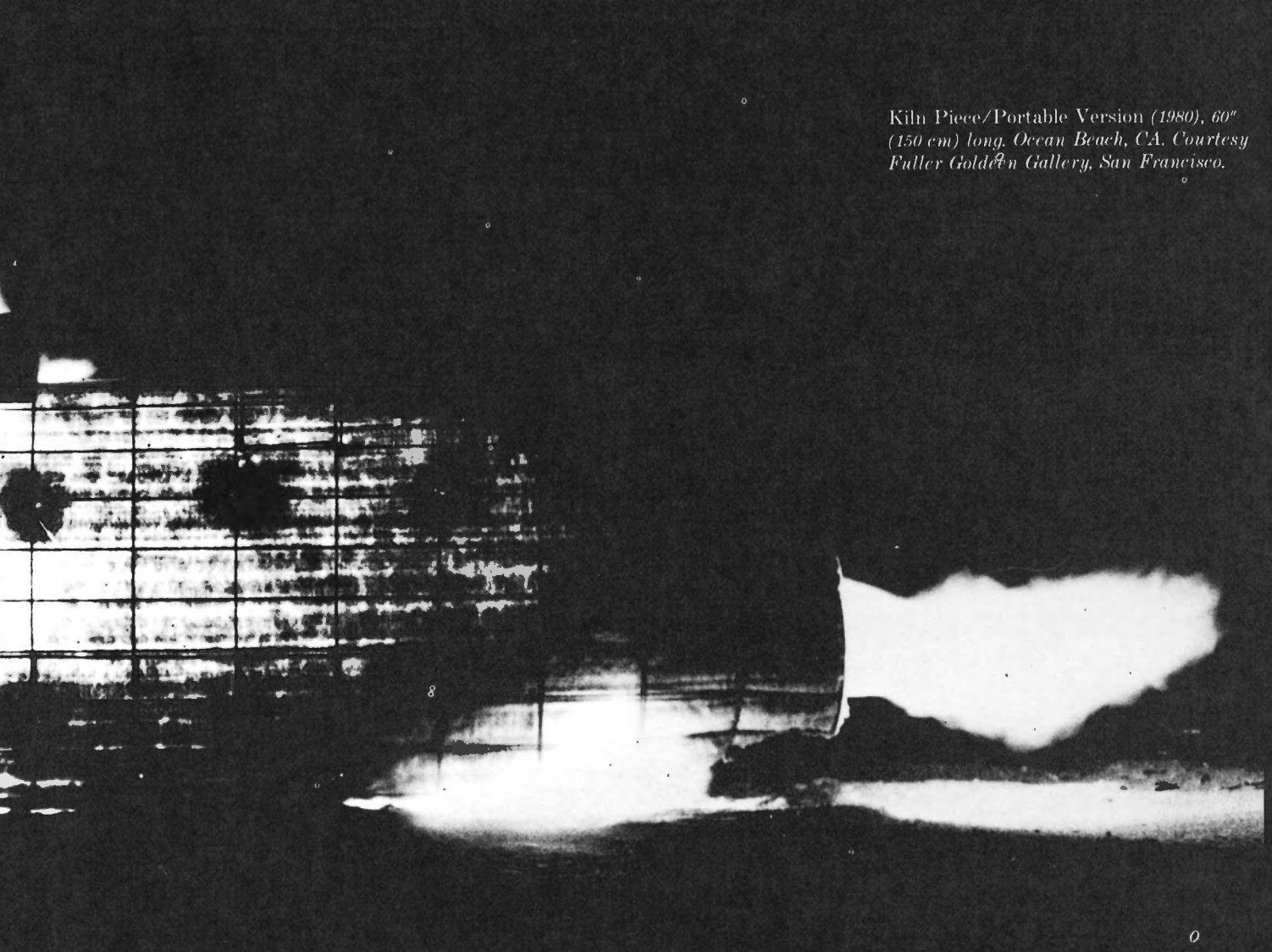
Ellen Priest, a former potter, is a painter and freelance art critic living in New Haven, Connecticut.

Untitled *sculpture (1952), 7' (2.1 m) high. Courtesy Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries, New York. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*



The Travels of John Roloff

Joanne Burstein



Kiln Piece/Portable Version *(1980), 60" (150 cm) long. Ocean Beach, CA. Courtesy Fuller Golden Gallery, San Francisco.*

To work in clay is, by definition, to involve oneself in alchemy. The materials are the basic elements of the earth; the transformation is by fire. John Roloff's unique involvement has been to take the individual magic of the Earth elements and the alchemical process of ceramics and create two different bodies of poetic imagery which rupture and redefine ceramic's traditional process.

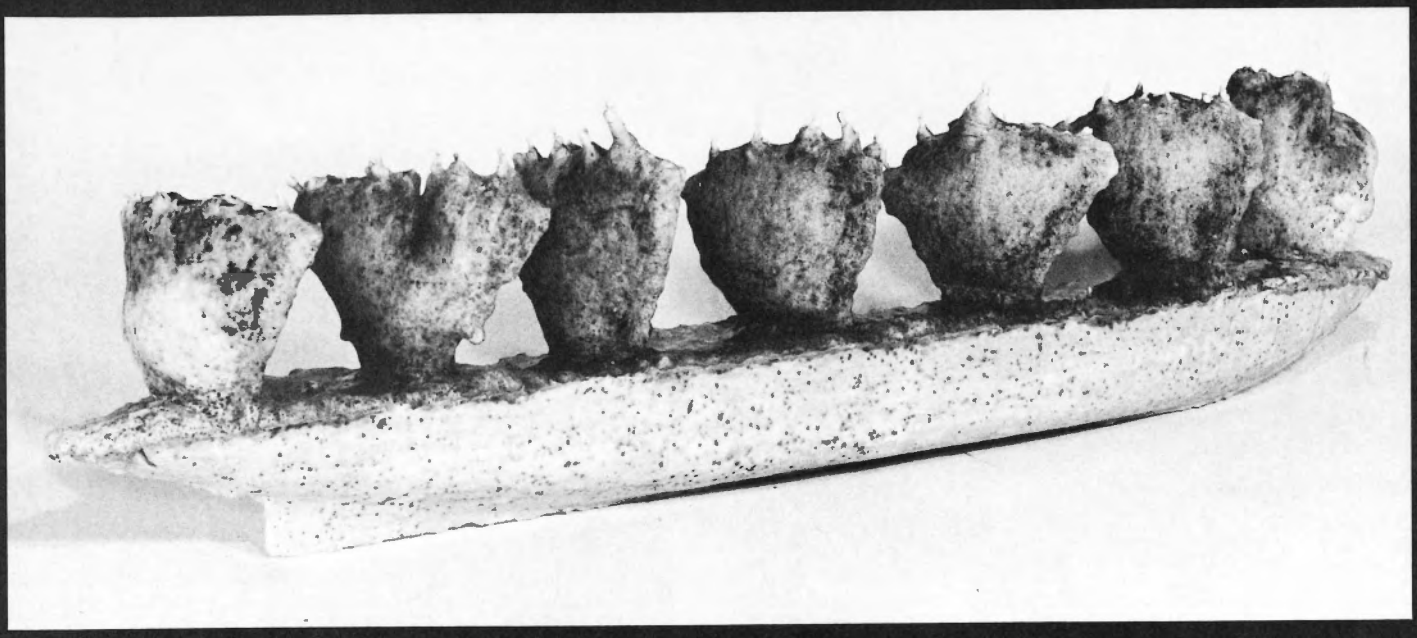
For over a decade, the ship has been his central metaphor. "The heat of the kiln became like Antarctica," he explains. "It was a place I couldn't go to. The ship went for me. I was sending it on a journey. What came back—the evidence of the voyage—could be seen on the ship."

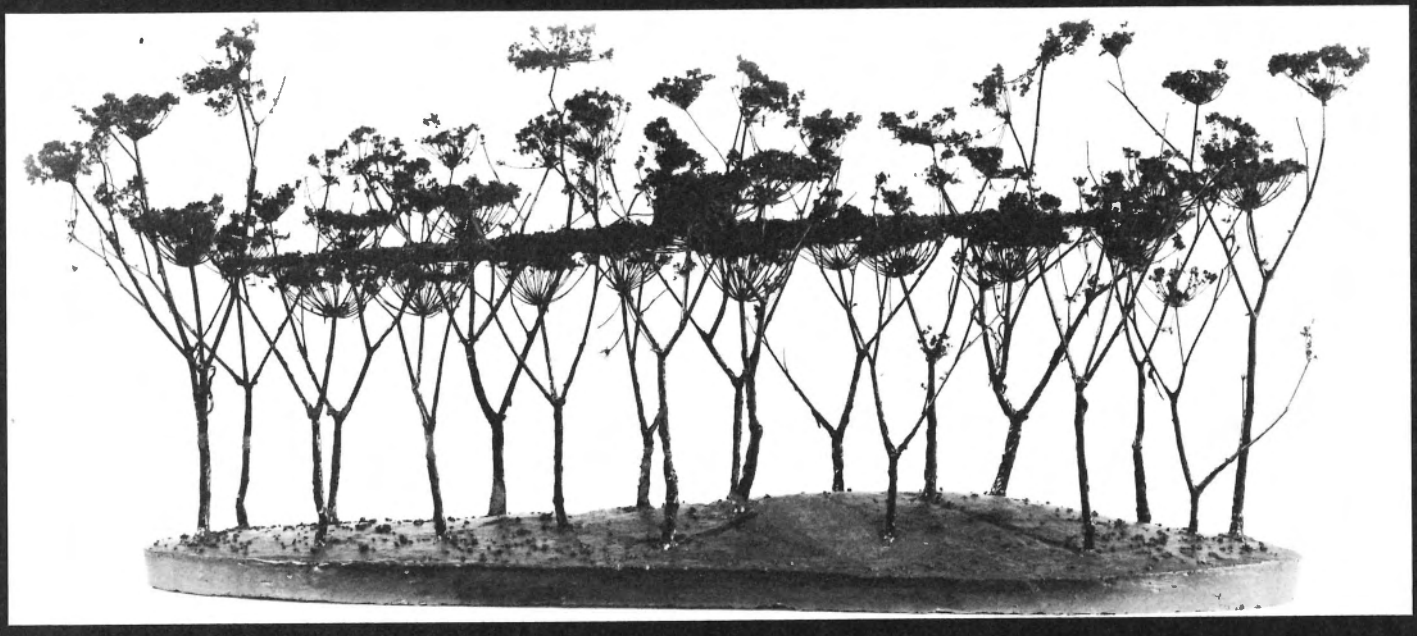
The ship is an allegorical symbol of exploration commonly found in children's tales such as Robinson Crusoe. But for Roloff, a childhood spent on the Oregon coast meant that the mystery and romance of the sea were also experiential. This intrigue with the sea led him to a serious study of marine geology at University of California, Davis. There, in the experimental and expansive late sixties, Roloff found in clay a way to deal with the mystery of "what it is" and began to ask, "what can it be?" The art structure was brought to Roloff's science by the surrealist influence of Robert Arneson and Lucian Pompili.

By 1975, Roloff had established two complementary methods of dealing with his imagery. Using a narrative mode, he constructed some highly crafted vignettes such as the *Exile Series,* done while teaching at the University of Kentucky. The small, unmanned boat adrift was a direct personal comment on Roloff's isolation in an unfamiliar part of the country. As a symbol, the ship or boat conveys exploration and discovery of the unknown. But beyond that, the small boat and lone oar convey the loneliness and vulnerability of that exploration. The delicate realistic detail of these boats and the sensuous expanse of the "water" surface synthesize the poetic duality of beauty and isolation.

Roloff balanced the explicit narrative content of the *Exile Series*—boats adrift on the surface of the sea—in a concurrent, untitled series of abstracted icy white ships which had gone down to the bottom. "As an act of imagination," he says, "the bottom of the ocean was the farthest place one could go." Roloff recognizes these two visual styles as an expression of the conscious versus the unconscious, narration versus imagination, as reality versus "the abysmal depths."

Roloff's more realistic work is, like most paintings and sculptures, created at a specific moment and stands as a complete statement. The abstracted work, however, is created over time, in a process of firing and refiring, staining and restaining,





which may go on for years. In these works, each firing informs the next. In a layered process, experiments yield technical information and this information in turn may suggest a new experiment. By the end of the process, what has been created may but faintly resemble a ship and, in fact, has transcended the explicit image to present something wholly new.

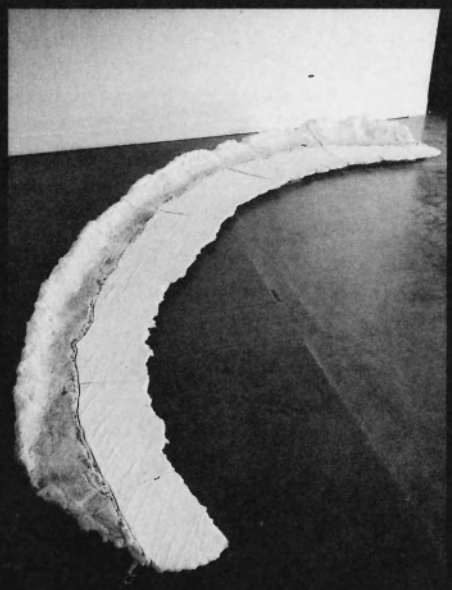
Roloff's ships all combine craftsmanship in clay with an intuitive understanding of the chemical periodic chart. Seeking to create a particular textural surface for a particular cast ship, Roloff instinctively heaps onto it what he thinks might be the appropriate chemicals, then fires it, and sees what in fact happens. The cast hull and the chemical and organic elements are the known factors; the created piece is an unpredictable visual result made of a unique combination of materials.

The experiment, *Untitled 38,* was part of a porcelain series for which the glaze surface was formulated to shrink far less than the body, producing a rippled hull not unlike the surface of water. In *Untitled 57,* the glaze shrinks far more than the body, giving the piece an aged and eroded surface. When I visited, Roloff was waiting to see the effect of raw salt applied to the clay model through the California rainy season. He finds the chemical variations to be endless and constantly rewarding him with new visual forms.

In 1977, Roloff interrupted his development of ship imagery and created *Shoreline Piece,* a sixteen-foot curved section of white ceramic coastline and rippled water. The glacial texture of the work shows Antarctica finally reached. Almost touching, the shore and the sea are the known and the unknown, the static and the changing. They express a confluence in duality that marks all Roloff's work.

Shoreline Piece was followed by a period in

which Roloff incorporated organic materials into his ships—leaves, grasses, palm fronds—as in *Untitled 50* and *Untitled 58.* The imagery emphasized the boat and the cave, and the boat as cave *(Untitled 71* and *Untitled 78).* In 1979, he returned to and completed the direction started by *Shoreline Piece* with another sixteen-foot installation, *Encased Piece.* Made of unfired clay, palm fronds, and cement, its human scale makes it, literally and figuratively, a boat-cave-forest. This layering of visual metaphors explicates Roloff's view of personal and artistic exploration as a necessarily isolated journey through unknown regions.
At each step in developing his image, the expansion of materials used moves between—what would happen if?—and the broader inclusion of nature. In retrospect, it comes as no surprise that a second body of work developed in 1979, when Roloff began creating large sculptural "kilns" of

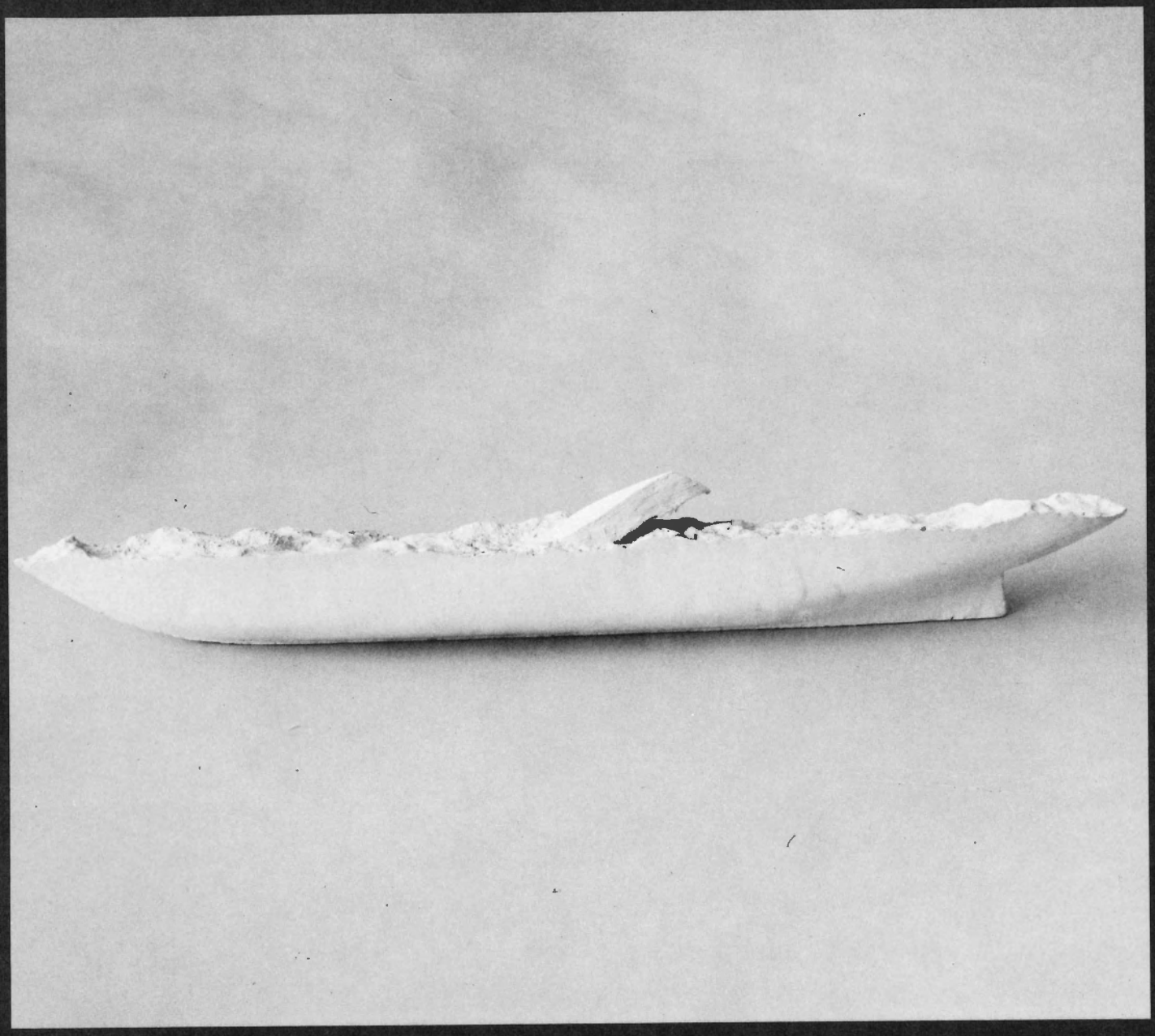


7 Pink Sails *(1980), 50" (125 cm) long.*

Topiary Monitor Model/The Treetop Sea *(1981), 48" (120 cm) long, clay, wood, and paint. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree.*

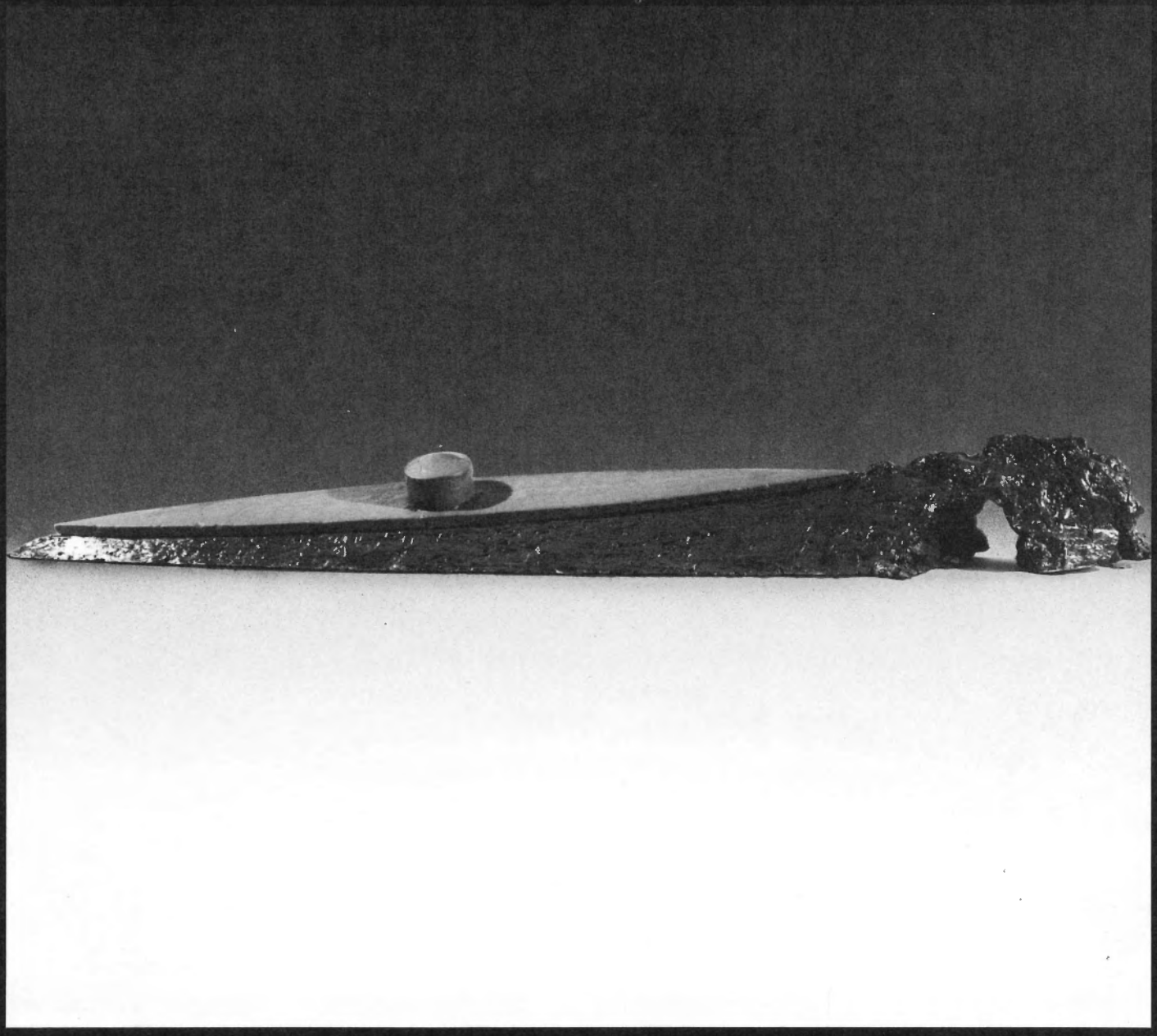
Exile Series #3 *(1975), 23" (5.7 cm). Collection San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco.*

Shoreline Piece *(1978), 16' (4.8 m) long. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco.*



Untitled No. 29 *(1975), 50″ (125 cm) long. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco.*

Land Monitor Model/Cave *(1981), 40″ (100 cm) long. Scale 1″ = 3′. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree.*



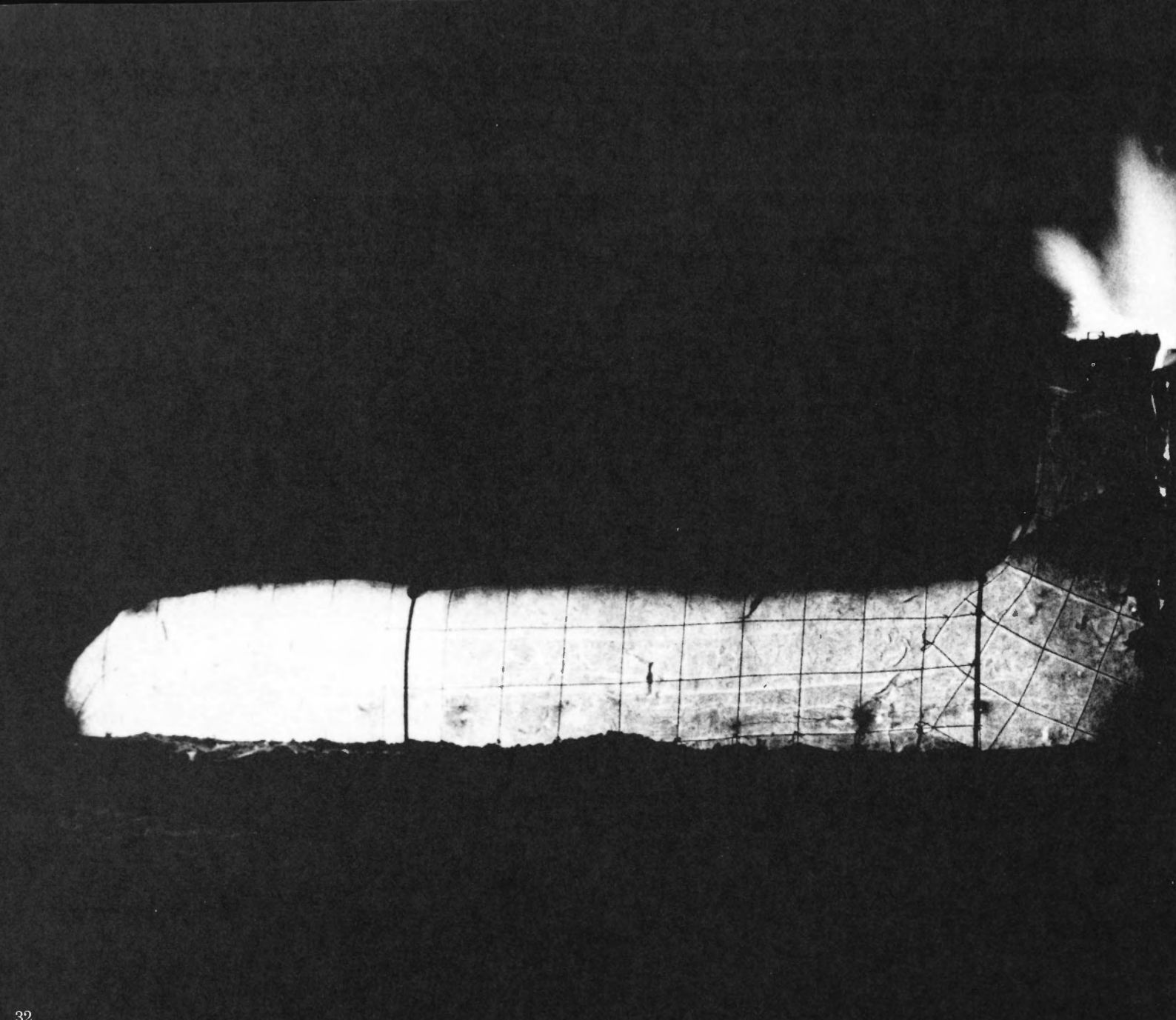
ceramic insulating sheet and steel rod. Fired on site, the kiln transformed the Earth itself by lining the ground beneath with ceramic materials that left a mark of the firing after the event. The luminous, open quality of these kilns brings observers as close as possible to the experience of being inside this alchemical chamber.

Like his narrative work, the kilns are constructed, fired, and finished. Even more experientially, they isolate a moment in time—unless you experience the event, it doesn't really exist. Yet traces of the transformation are left on the fired surface of the Earth, which has become a new, incorporated coating of unique elements.

Currently, Roloff is proposing a series of large, environmental, site-specific pieces for University of California, San Diego. These will combine the theme of river and boat either by using the actual river site or by building large site kilns in the form of a many veined river on the hillside above. Some of the imagery for these proposals appeared first in 1981, in *The Land Monitor Series.* The simple shape of the Monitor, that ironclad warship made famous during the Civil War, was integrated into the landscape. The hull becomes a cave, the trees become the ship, and the ship and the volcano embrace each other.

Roloff retains his images for great lengths of time, playing with them in visual and literary associations. But these symbolic images ultimately serve as a context for the Romantic event: the process of creation. His knowledge of Earth/ceramic elements and his willingness to experiment freely with them has also allowed science and technology to participate in this process. His romantic attachment to the mystery of the sea and the sea voyage, with its possibility for success or disaster, has led Roloff to produce dramatic landscape events without precedent and a series of beautiful, mysteriously allegorical artifacts for contemplation.

Joanne Burstein is an artist, critic, and frequent contributor to Artweek.

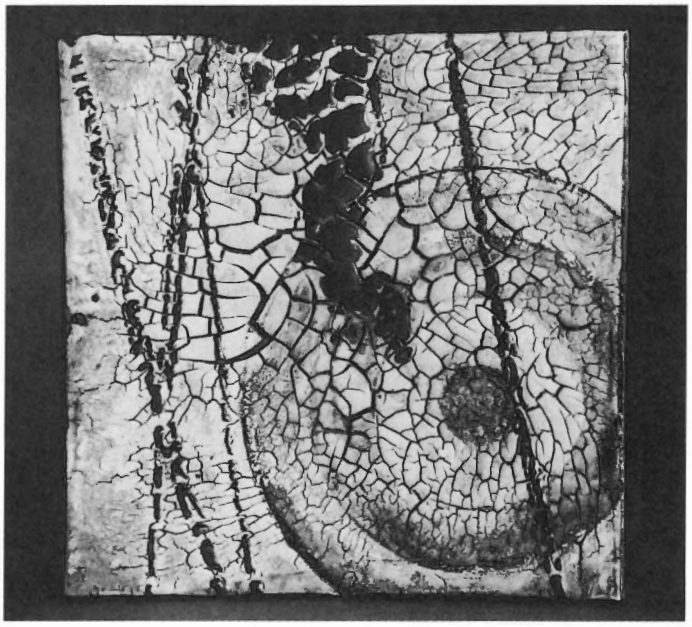


Land Monitor/Fired Volcanic Boulder (Night Firing) *(1980), 20′ (6 m) long. Albuquerque, NM. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco.*

Prairie Starfish/Glacial Epoch *(1980), 20′ (6 m) diameter. Kiln project, Craven Saskatchewan. Ceramic fiber blanket, steel bottom. Courtesy Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco.*

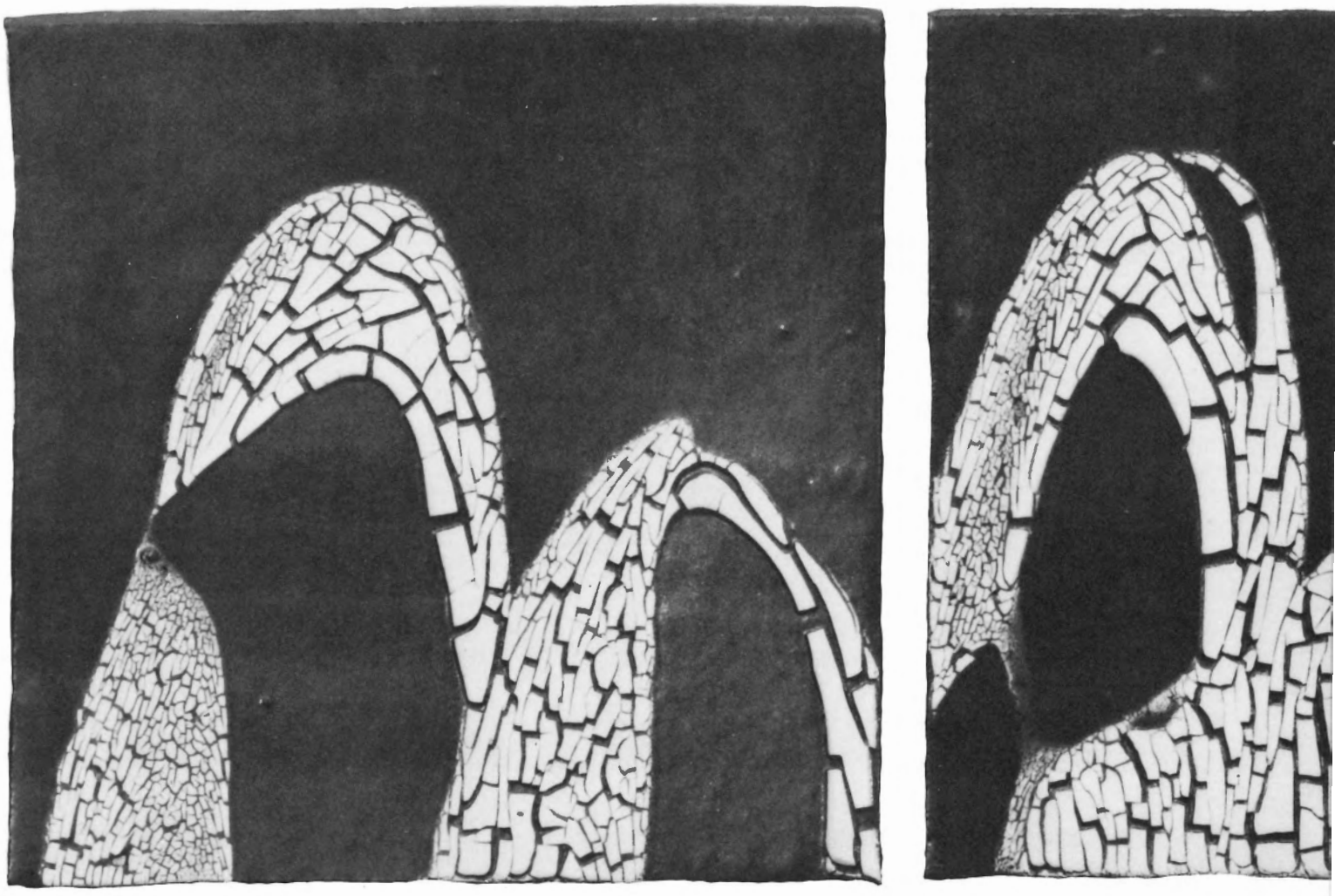
Tablets of Earth

Matthew Kangas



Untitled *(1979) by Robert Sperry, 16" (40 cm). Photo: Ed Marquand.*

Plate Triptych *(1981) by Robert Sperry, 16" (40 cm) square.*

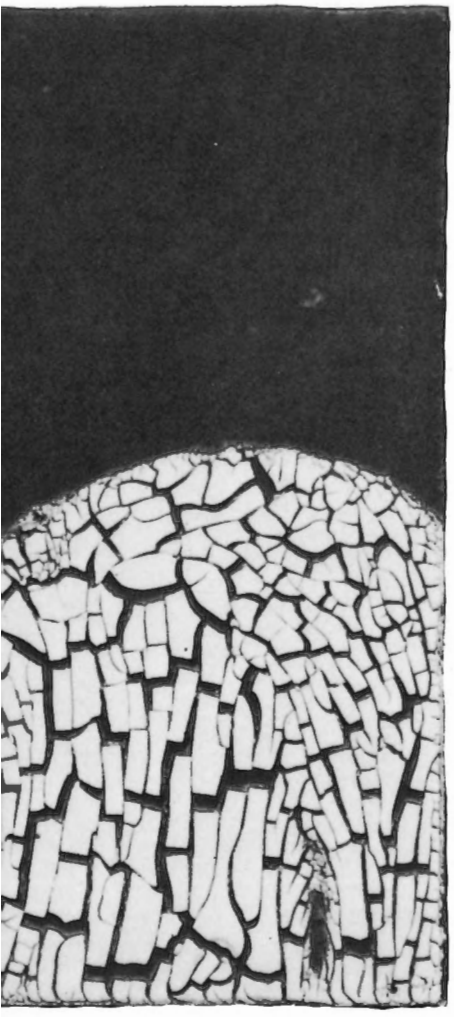


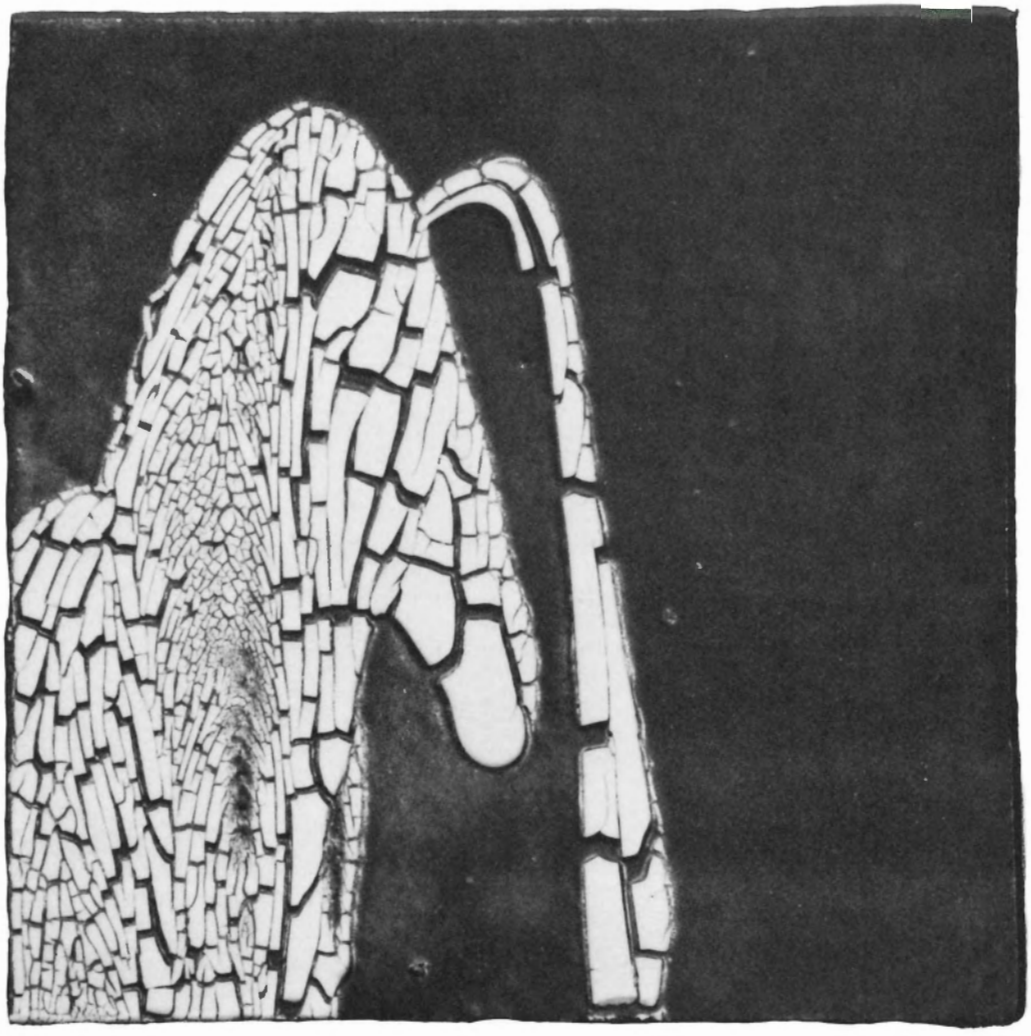
The Ten Commandments were etched into stone tablets; but they could have been carved into clay; which in ancient times was used primarily for transmitting languages such as cuneiform. Today, American ceramic artists are using clay tablets for pictorial expression. Not interested in exploring the potential of the vessel forms, these artists are instead producing two-dimensional images that are personal and often abstract, which push beyond the limits of such historical examples as architectural murals, wall and floor tiles, and mosaics. Their experiments counter the longstanding view that ceramics must conform to the convention of the vessel. Their achievements remind us that contemporary art need not emerge from traditional practices to gain acceptance.

The best-known contemporary flat clay project is probably the series of collaborations conducted by Margie Hughto during the late 1970s at Syracuse University, where she assisted established Modernist painters like Helen Frankenthaler and Kenneth Noland in making "editions" of ceramic plates. With Clement Greenberg as their mentor, these artists made ceramics that abided by his cherished "integrity of the picture plane." (Hughto was already working in that formalist vein—although she has more recently mined rougher surfaces and cruder textures.) The resulting twenty-four wall plates that Frankenthaler showed at the Guggenheim Museum in the mid-seventies were generally considered disappointing. (This did not stop Garth Clark, who collaborated with Hughto on the exhibition and the book, *A Century of Ceramics in the United States, 1878–1978,* from hailing them as artworld endorsements of ceramics.) Frankenthaler's imagery was always conceptually and materially thin. Although her early paintings shared the gestural styles of Jackson Pollock, whom she met during a crucial stage of her career, none equalled the psychological force of Pollock's drips. The shift from large scale to small and from paint to unfamiliar ceramics seemed only to emphasize the trivial aspect of her work, a revelation that in my opinion alone made the Syracuse experiment valuable.

Away from the East Coast, however, many artists have been producing flat images in clay for some time. Among them are Richard Deutsch, Liza Halvorsen, Anne Hirondelle, Vincent McGrath, Mary Robinson, Robert Sperry, and Nicholas Wood, most of whom have developed under the general influence of West Coast ceramics. As a group, they include two generations of craftsmen who have shied away from the vessel because its cylindrical surface is difficult to decorate.

Robert Sperry, the oldest of the group, is the preëminent Abstract Expressionist tablet maker in the United States. Sperry trained as a painter at the Art Institute of Chicago, then as a ceramist at the University of Washington where he received his MFA. After





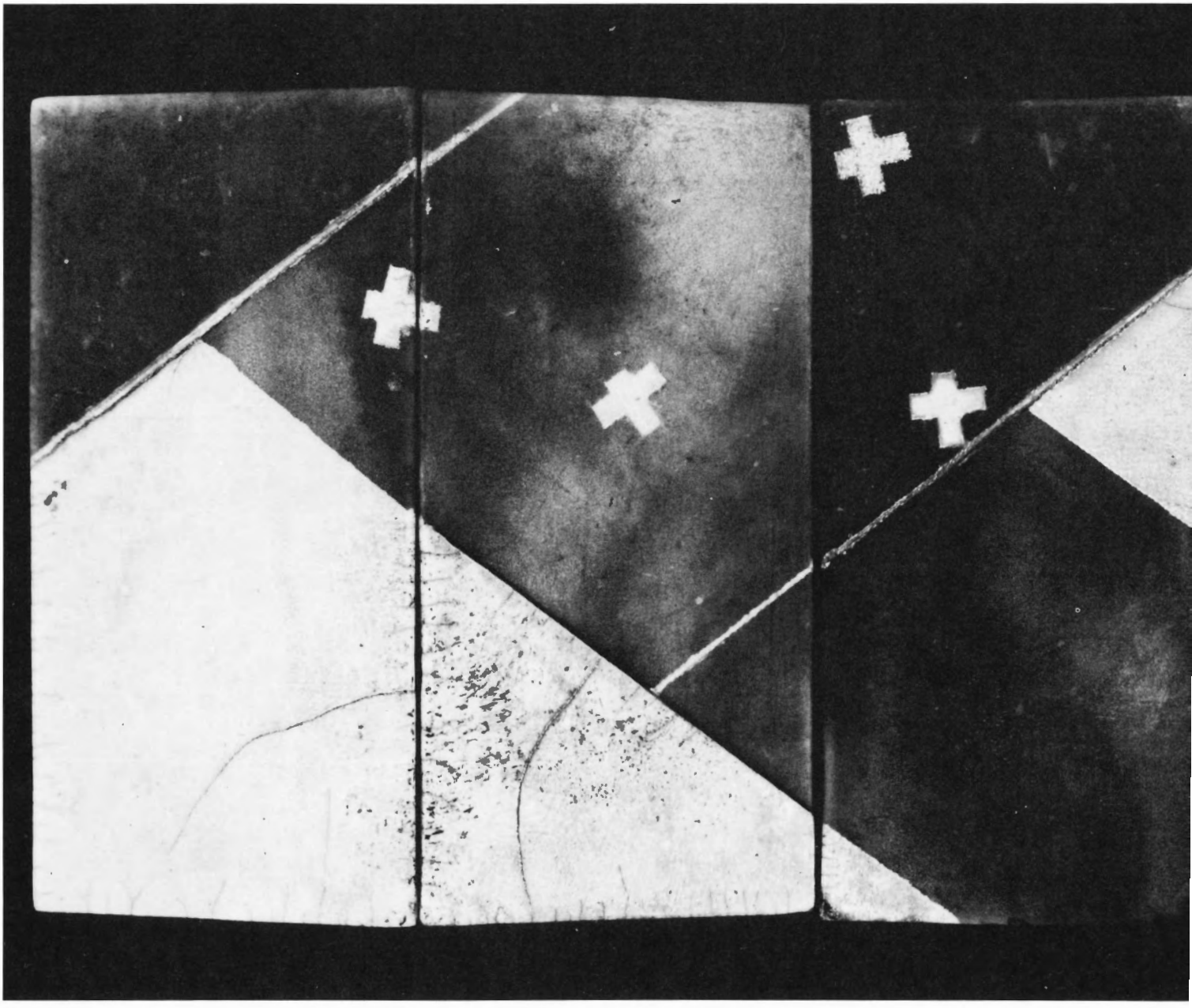
studying under the Swiss production ware designer Paul Bonifas, Sperry stayed in Seattle, where his work developed in isolation from the California movement of the fifties. He eventually became chairman of the ceramics department at the University of Washington, a post he retained until his retirement last year. Sperry continued to paint as he pursued ceramics. Over the years he grew away from the vessel, and finally abandoned it to concentrate on flat ceramics. Unlike Frankenthaler, however, Sperry has a thorough knowledge of the medium. With an approach similar to that of the Action painters, he lets the firing process determine much of the abstract pattern of the completed image. His ground of crackled slip is suffused with a monumental simplicity of gesture.

Although he pioneered the use of gold and silver lusters, in the late sixties and early seventies, Sperry reduced his palette to black and white. He usually applies the colors onto single tablets; but occasionally he uses multiple panels, which provide a larger surface and therefore a wider range for his arm to sweep. The vigorous style of Sperry's gestures resembles that of Robert Motherwell's paintings, and the resulting images constitute the most powerful, and the most neglected, American ceramics of the past two decades.

Like Sperry, Nicholas Wood and Liza Halvorsen produce wall elements. Their treatment of the modular unit, however, differs from Sperry's. Wood, who directs the ceramics program at the University of Texas at Arlington, began experimenting with unglazed and carved terra cotta reliefs in the late seventies. Initially, his pieces were done in the spirit of works by Carl Andre and Joel Shapiro. *Exteriors* (1980) consists of six units, each with deeply carved geometric reliefs. The vertical rectangles that progress from simple to complex forms are, according to Wood, inspired by the structure of the Hopi language. With their dry surfaces, and their deep shadows falling on the wall behind, these pieces seem to arise from meditations on sunlit Southwestern architecture.

A companion piece, *Interiors/Passage* (1980), reverses the bas-relief process. Each of the five elements contains notches that act without reference to other serial parts. Wood extends these relief and notching devices in his current work, of which *Interiors (Study)/Glyph* (1981) is a fine example. Leaving aside the Minimalist serial quality, he enriches the surface with additions of colored slips and irregular geometric lines, thus forming shapes within the original modules. The thickness of the tablets and the varying shadows around the edges constitute a subtle yet important part of the impact of Wood's art.

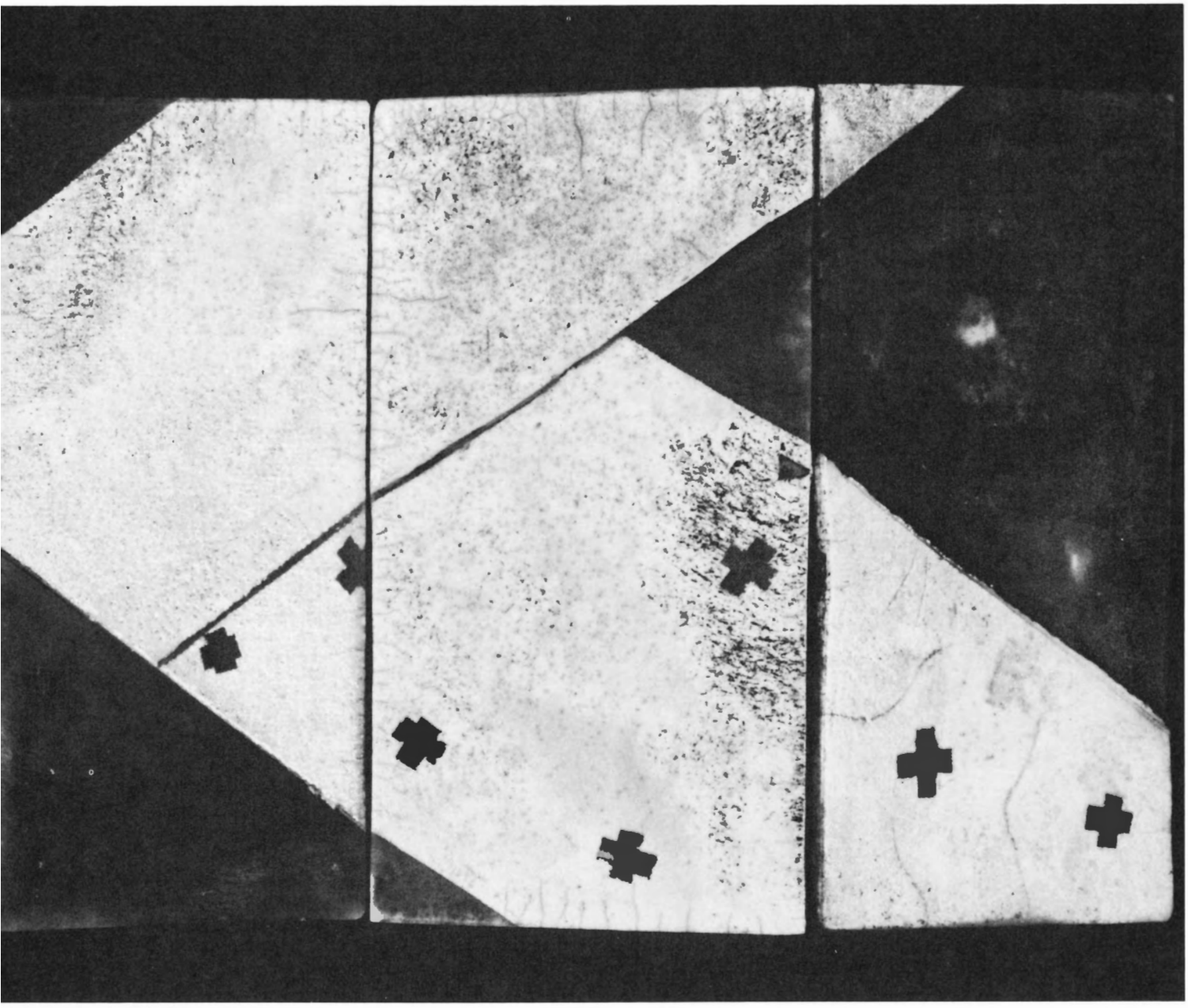
To the extent that her representational images continue from one



tile to the next, Liza Halvorsen's clay tablets resemble Sperry's compositions. However, Sperry's are made of stoneware and low-fire glazes; Halvorsen's consist of raku-fired porcelain. In *Calligraphic Fishing Pole* (1981), she cast two bamboo fishing poles and placed them at intersecting angles. Then she decorated the surface with lines resembling calligraphy or fishing line. The smoky raku surface conveys the illusion of a beachcombing foray or the bottom of a tidal pool. The iconography of *Fall Cycle* includes salmon and other marine animals of the Pacific Northwest, where Halvorsen lives and works.

At Port Townsend, on the Olympic Peninsula of Puget Sound, Anne Hirondelle maintains a production pottery where she has only recently begun a series of gray and black earthenware plaques. Like Sperry's, her pictures refer more to the clay medium than to the natural environment. Curves, angles, and lines are etched into the pliant surface, building up sections of varying depths. The images are a natural shift for a potter whose vessels have been angular and curved, rather than round and highly decorated. While at present their smoky monochromism and searching line may show more promise than results, the potential for development is there.

Another artist who is taking clay drawing in an exciting direction is Vincent McGrath, an Australian who heads the ceramics



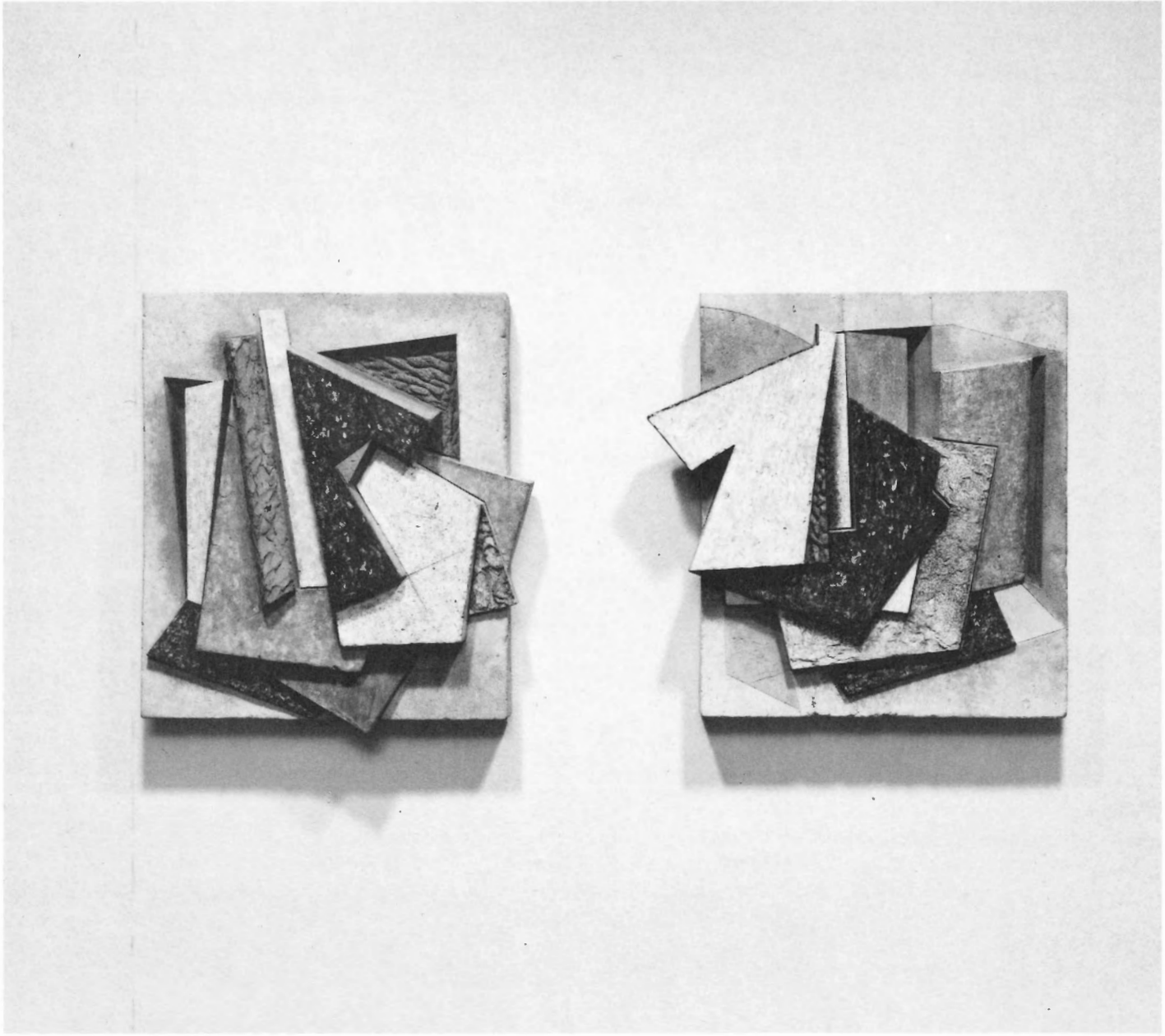
Screen II *(1982) by Liza Halvorsen, 49" (122.5 cm) long. Courtesy Foster/White Gallery, Seattle. Photo: Robert W. Vinnedge.*

Site V—Dervish *(1982–1983) by Nicholas Wood, 15½" (38.75 cm) high, terracotta with colored slips. Photo: Joe Doherty.*

Untitled. *(1981) by Anne Hirondelle, 17" (42.5 cm) high. Photo: Roger Schreiber.*

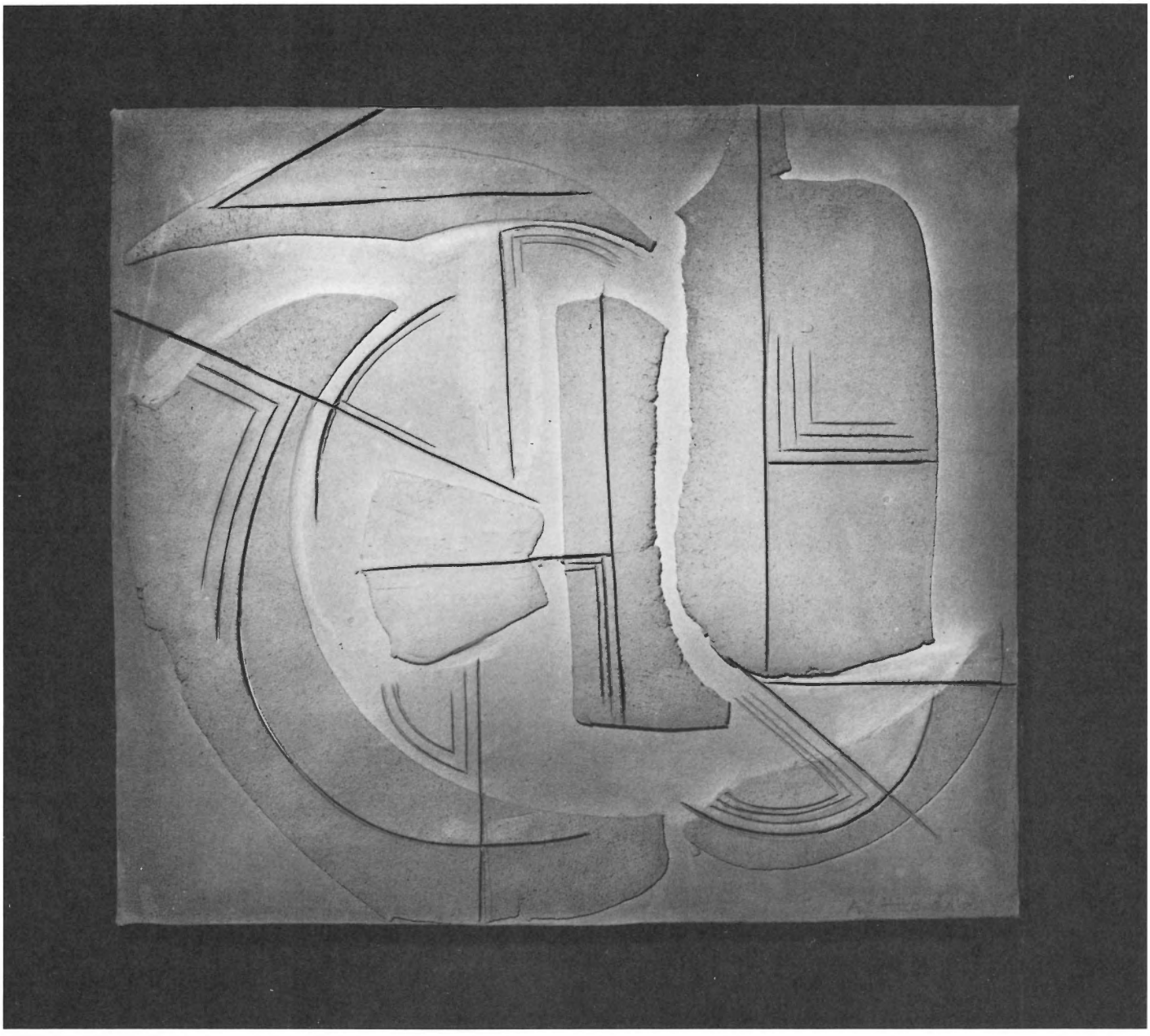
division of Darwin Community College and who was a visiting artist at the University of Puget Sound last year. McGrath's depictions of parched and sodden landscapes show the influence of the stark tropical environment of Australia's Northern Territory. *Victoria River Downs* (1981), for example, of raku-fired earthenware with scratched lines on a pinkish ground, was inspired by "the harsh climate, the respect for nature's survival, and the difficulty of man asserting a long-term influence on the land," according to McGrath. We also see the influence of polychrome West Coast ceramics in McGrath's heavy reliance on color. His works suggest maps or aerial views of wind storms, or the baking sun of the Southern Hemisphere. In McGrath's variation on the flat clay theme, the rectangular format is ruptured; the edges are torn and cut, a detail that perfectly suits his tempestuous images of natural growth.

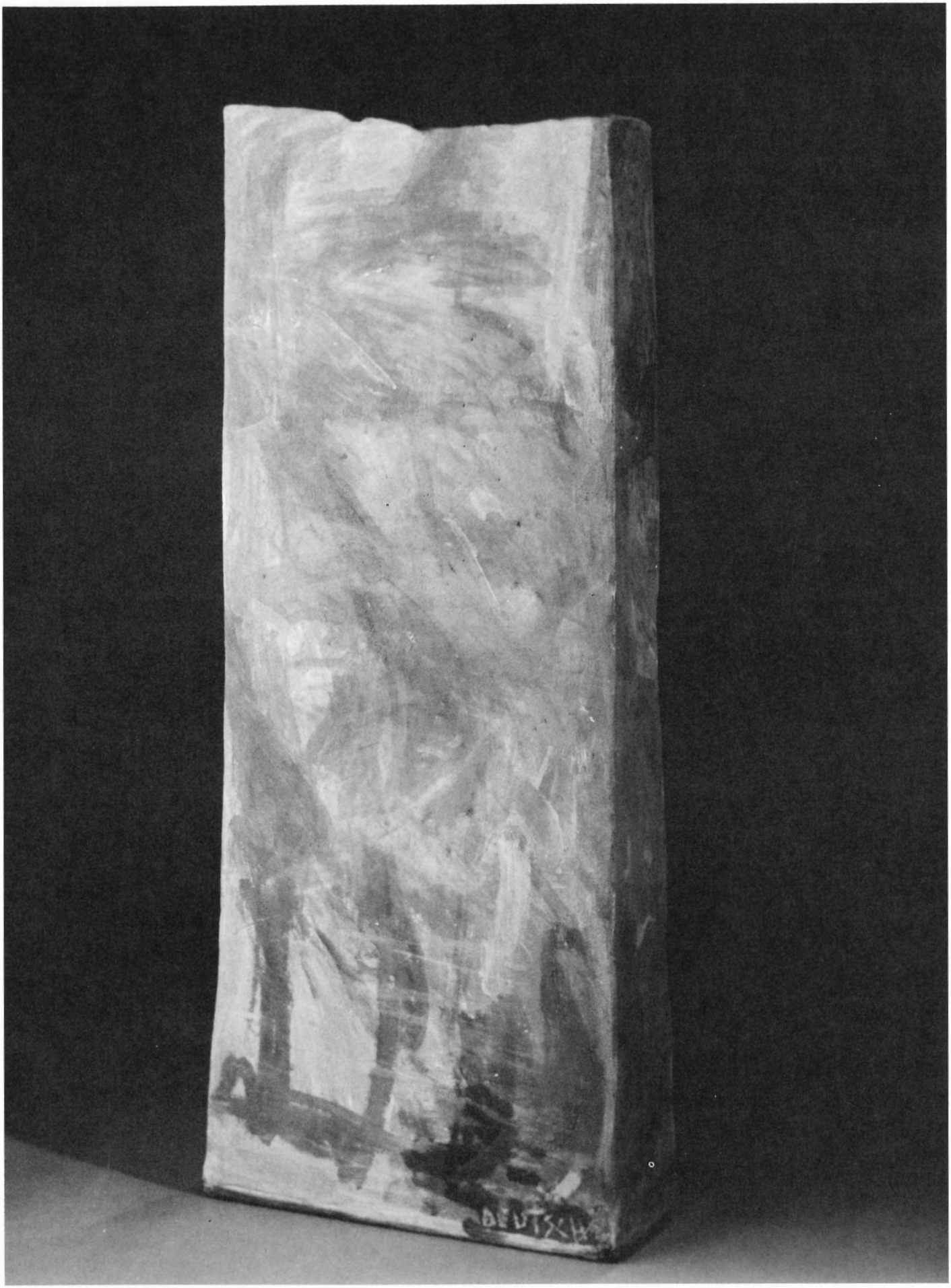
A long trip to Australia, in 1981, had a similar impact on Seattle sculptor Mary Robinson. Like McGrath, she alters the rectangular shape of the clay slabs to convey the rugged character of the Outback. Robinson turned from vessels to irregular-shaped surfaces because, in her words, "the nature of the image must dictate the shape." These images changed dramatically after she saw aboriginal rock and bark paintings in Australia. Her works share with those of McGrath and Hirondelle a rough-hewn style of drawing, but, like Wood's, they tend toward low-relief.



Robinson laminates porcelain onto a raku clay body, then casts fish or wood scraps in a mold. The clay is poured, dried, and bisque-fired. Then Robinson applies copper oxide for a raku firing, in which the pieces are reduction-fired in various types of organic matter. Through this process the plaques acquire a surface that is both ancient and dramatic in appearance. Folk art is Robinson's point of departure, and via the burnished surface of her "fossilized" fish, one becomes aware of a distant moment in time. While Richard Deutsch is known for his vessels, his recently exhibited free-standing slabs warrant consideration. Three or four feet tall, they offer expansive, flat surfaces for decoration. And they succeed without indulging in the kind of overdecoration that plagues contemporary ceramic sculpture. Although *Mesa* (1982) is too thick to be considered truly a tablet, its random scratches and orderly rectilinear designs make for a rich surface. *Winter* and *Savage* (both 1982) give him even greater ornamental latitude. Five inches thick and four feet tall, they manifest sculptural force and finely integrated surface decoration. Along with Robinson and McGrath, Deutsch belongs to the primitive wing of the flat clay movement. And together with the Modernist images of Sperry, Wood, Hirondelle, and Halvorsen, they provide convincing evidence that a new and vital ceramic tradition is now in the making.

Matthew Kangas wrote the catalogue essay for Patti Warashina/ Recent Work, *an exhibition at the Tucson Museum of Art. He also writes about American ceramics and glass for* Vanguard *and* Art in America. *He lives in Seattle.*





Savage *(1982) by Richard Deutsch, 56¼" (141.25 cm) high. Courtesy Foster/White Gallery, Seattle. Photo: Photographic Visions.*

Untitled *(1982) by Mary Robinson 13" X 9" (32.5 X 22.5 cm). Courtesy Northwest Craft Center. Photo: Randy Erickson.*

Porcelain Jar *(1982), 24" (60 cm) high.*
Photo: Gary Sutton.

Kenneth Ferguson

Michael G. Rubin

The crucial question of object maker as artist or as craftsman must be faced.
Lee Nordness *Objects U.S.A.*

For the last three decades, the issue of whether ceramists are artists or craftsmen has persisted doggedly, clouded by the absence of comprehensive historical scholarship. A number of contemporary potters, however, have begun to resolve the question by using clay for focused artistic expression. They are shifting the emphasis of the medium from utilitarianism to that which welcomes the search for expressive form. This transition has occurred in other media throughout history, showing us useful parallels to the current situation of American ceramists.

The change brought by Dutch printmakers of the seventeenth century is a particularly fine analogy. Like contemporary ceramics, there was a rapid increase of able craftsmen, first of engravers, then of etchers. Popular demand for their work also expanded, resulting in a broader market and the sophistication of printmaking techniques and further innovation. Hercules Séger's colored prints, Herdiik Goudt's rich tonal engravings, and Gerrit Pieterz's linear etchings, for example, provided the foundation for Rembrandt's vision and experimentation.[1] Further developments in etching and mezzo tint accounted for the distinct darkness of Dutch Mannerist prints.[2] Above all, this maturation freed printmaking from documentary and illustrative constraints, bringing it out of the craft realm of utilitarianism and into the mainstream of European art. I think it is clear that, just as prints by masters of the Dutch Golden Age were viewed and collected as worthy examples of art, ceramics by such artists as Peter Voulkos, Rudy Autio, Ken Price, Paul Soldner, Ron Nagle, Ken Ferguson, and others will eventually be appreciated as genuine contributions to American art.

Ken Ferguson's career, in particular, exemplifies the changing role of American potters. His ceramics have evolved from rigidly controlled and finely crafted utilitarian ware into highly expressive vessels. His current works exhibit an openness in both form and decoration that imbues deceptively casual gestures with poignant visual meaning.

As a student at Alfred University, Ferguson learned the value of symmetry in form, restrained decoration, and disciplined craftsmanship.[3] He was graduated in 1958 and became resident director of the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana. During his six years there his skills developed in relative freedom, resulting in pottery that was both direct in means and confident in function. He also acquired the administrative skills that have served him well throughout his subsequent tenure at Kansas City Art Institute.[4]

The covered jar is Ferguson's favored form. Characterized in the past by emphatic verticality and moderate decoration, it has grown more idiosyncratic over the years. Recent examples stray from their central vertical axis. Divided into two swelling top and bottom sections, they have gained a lifelike quality. Their rims flare outward into disks that counterbalance the shape of the entire form. The slight irregularity of the rims underscores the rhythmic movement of Ferguson's hand during the throwing process. With its oversized nob, the lid seems to be a miniature variation of the form itself, accentuating the jar's vertical thrust. A seam runs along the junction of the top and bottom sections, leading the eye in a circular path. The diagonal slashes that Ferguson incises into the walls reflect his interest in drawing. All of these details reveal that the successful function of the jars now depends more on aesthetics than on utility. The bubbly crusts of the carbon-trap glazes are further evidence of this.

Ferguson continues to be influenced by nineteenth-century American stoneware jars and churns. Yet his interpretations fuse both forms into a single contemporary hybrid.[5] Another influence is Japanese Oribe ware. The bold designs and fluid decorations manifested in Oribe pots—such features as sagging spouts, flat strap handles, and runny green glazes—often find their way into Ferguson's teapots, enlarged to a bolder scale.[6]

The Oribe influence is also evident in the two kinds of clay baskets Ferguson makes. One has high walls and a large hand-formed handle, which is made either of one thick strap of clay or of segments. The second basket resembles a tray or deep dish, with walls several inches high. As in the first, the handle is a critical element, bringing the walls of the container and carrying the eye from side to side. In this way the viewer is made aware of the active negative space articulated by the form. Oribe dishes with bail handles show a similar relationship between walls and handles, a relationship that helps define the scale of the form.[7]

A love of drawing underlies Ferguson's approach to decoration. His affection for linear designs is evident in the concise slashes and creases on the walls of his vessels and in the streams of glaze he pours over their surfaces. He is more specific, however, in his large platters, the surfaces of which are decorated with contour drawings of the female figure. He openly delights in its erotic potential. The burrs of clay raised along the incised lines excite the viewer's eye with their emphatic three-dimensionality.

His *Adam and Eve* platters are particularly meaningful. They consist of a man and a woman separated either by a serpent or by a serpent and a tree. In addition, these thick-rimmed platters are occasionally inscribed with satirical remarks. Similar platters were produced by early

Adam & Eve *(1982), 24" (60 cm) diameter.*

Stoneware Teapot *(1982), 13" (32.5 cm) high.*

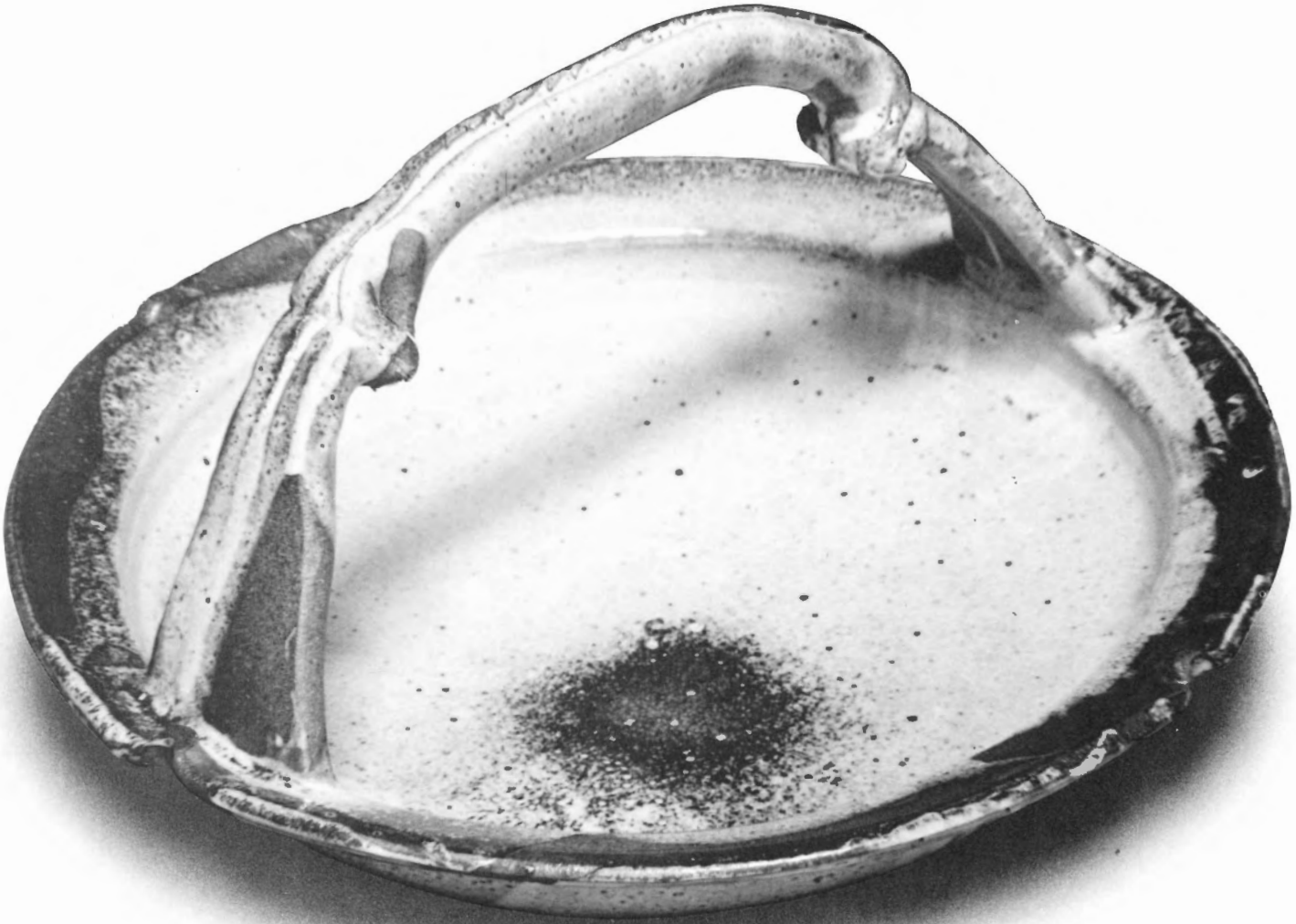
Pennsylvania Dutch potters. For example, George Hubener inscribed plates with the name of their owner, biblical verse, and humorous advice.[8] Ferguson's source lies even further back in history: the Staffordshire *Adam and Eve* dish, which first appeared in the seventeenth century and remained popular in England until the mid-nineteenth century.[9] These plates show a variety of representational decoration ranging from bold ornamental patterns to crisp pictorial realism. One from 1725 displays the two biblical protagonists separated by a flowering tree that conceals the demonic serpent. Inscribed in a center square is the biblical, "the sting of death is sinne the strength of sin is the Law."[10] Ferguson counters sardonically on a recent *Adam and Eve* platter, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, if the women don't get you the liquor must." The figures, drawn with linear simplicity, are blatantly self-conscious and seem to come alive in each sure-handed stroke. Resting easily inside the platter's rim, the drawing dominates the shape while it adjusts to the encompassing form. A salt glaze retains the freshness of the surface, and the white clay is further decorated with fragments of blue salt glaze.

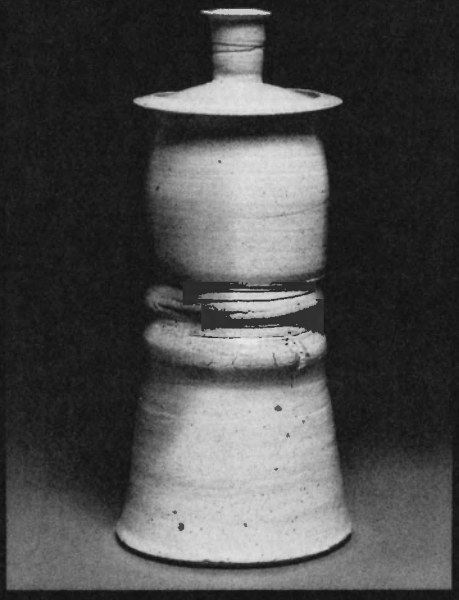
From Staffordshire to Oribe ware, Ken Ferguson finds elements to forge into innovative ceramics. In tapping past traditions, he renews them, proving their relevence to today, and providing the deep reservoir of meaning from which his pots draw their vital contemporaneity. And it is this potent source that makes him a leader of the American clay movement.

1. Clifford S. Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), p. XXIII.
2. Ibid., p. XXV.
3. Interview with Ken Ferguson conducted by the author, October 1982.
4. "The Archie Bray Foundation," *Ceramics Monthly* May 1972, p. 19.
5. Harold F. Guilland, *Early American Folk Pottery* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Co., 1971), p. 127.
6. Hugo Munsterberg, *The Ceramic Art of Japan: A Handbook for Collectors* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1964), p. 106.
7. Ibid., p. 123.
8. Guilland, *Early American Folk Pottery,* p. 264, 289. Also see Frances Lichten, *Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 271, for a typical "Adam and Eve" block motif used as a frame for religious text.
9. *Frank and Harriet Burnap Collection of English Pottery* 2nd ed. (Kansas City, Missouri: Nelson-Atkins Museum, 1967), pp. 69–71.
10. Ibid., p. 32.

The work of Ken Ferguson may be seen at Morgan Gallery, Shawnee Mission, Kansas; Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis; Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles; Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, New York.

Michael G. Rubin is a freelance art critic who also writes for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. *He wishes to acknowledge Ken Ferguson's generous help in preparing this article.*

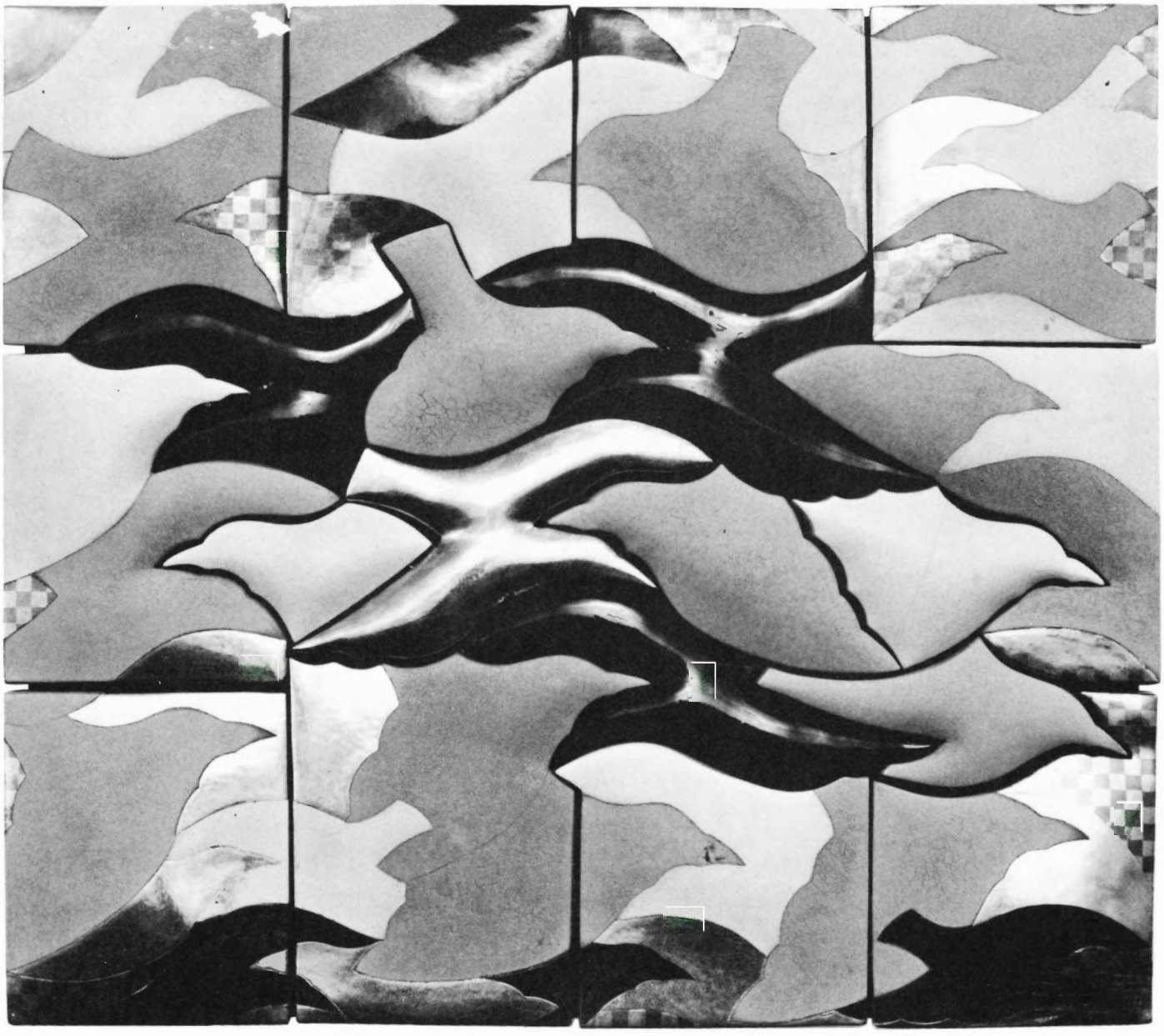




Stoneware Basket *(1982), 18" (45 cm) diameter. Photo: Gary Sutton.*

Stoneware Jar *(1982), 24" (60 cm) high, carbon trap glaze. Collection Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City. Photo: Garry Sutton.*

Exhibitions



Untitled *(1983), 36" (90 cm) high. Courtesy Theo Portnoy Gallery, New York.*

Ralph Bacerra

Sarah Bodine

Intricate decoration has been a source of gentle visual delight in Ralph Bacerra's work since he found his medium in clay in the early 1960s. Geometric Persian-inspired motifs, mythical animal shapes, flowers and birds in complex patterning, and bright, clear colors all invigorate his classic Oriental vessel forms.

In the seventies Bacerra's decoration suddenly came to life. It jumped off the sleek surfaces and launched into three dimensions. First to move were the mythical animals, whose spindly legs supported amorphous truncated bodies, stretched free of their glassy enclosures. And now it seems that Bacerra has pulled his delicate porcelain casserole lids flat and made their decoration jump into three dimensions like a kind of child's pop-up toy. The rhythmic bird-form motifs are now enlarged into a pillowlike, sensuous, tangible relief.

In his most recent series, Bacerra has distorted scale and perspective to create a Mannerist condition of pattern. Here an outer square is formed by the combination of bodies of doves. The composition progresses from interior three-dimensional bird bodies, packed tightly together, to a looser configuration of larger, less recognizable two-dimensional shapes which are transformed into straight lines and curves on the perimeter. The interlocking bodies are separated by irregular interstices which act to reinforce and delineate the puzzle pieces. On the outer shapes, however, the introduction of straight lines suggests the more conventional tilelike aspect of the work. This separation of elements by format (which could be compared to the recent Polaroid montages by David Hockney, where the white paper border around each photo acts as a barrier to the continuous perception of the image) intentionally interrupts the flow of the forms and works against viewing the piece as a whole. Further complexity arises from the fact that similar shapes, repeated in varying colors, patterns, and patinas across the square field, are sometimes sculpted, sometimes painted.

The work derives its intangible movement from a figure/ground shift in both a literal and figurative sense. The elements suggest landscape, sky, wings, beaks, and bird bodies. The movement is multidirectional and mesmerizing, heightened by dazzling silver and gold luster, bright blues, gunmetal greens, orange-peel reds and yellows. Opaque and transparent, smooth and rough, metallic and milky, straight and scalloped, organic and geometric—the force of opposites provides further animation.

This wall-mounted three-dimensional manifestation of familiar imagery has raised some aesthetic and technical issues with which Bacerra has not before dealt. One can imagine the process of discovery: Perhaps while working in his studio one day, carefully painting intricate patterns on his casserole lids using a magnifying glass, Bacerra discovered that the field encompassed by the glass took on a meaning, structure, and integrity of its own. All of a sudden that detail held more importance than the casserole as a whole. Fascinated, he decided to examine only that area, concentrate on its potential for depth, color, line, expression, and rhythm. He enlarged it to examine the texture, the shape, the line, to see if it blurred or distorted, if it lost its impact. The magnification caused new technical problems, which Bacerra seems to have faced with both discovery and resignation.

When examined out of context some of the individual shapes seem like awkward, undefined accommodations to both the overall format and their interlocked partner. Another problem is the flux of glazes and colorants on these larger forms. Bacerra has allowed cobalt blues to bleed along the edges of some shapes; some of the orange-peel texture is mottled; minor cracks remain in some edges. Taken with the fact that the tiles are not absolutely square on the perimeter or flat on their aluminum backing, this distortion reinforces the notion of magnification. And Bacerra seems to have accepted the fact that magnification makes defects become more apparent.

An aesthetic comparison with the work of Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher is inevitable, although Bacerra's shapes and progressive relationships of forms are less mechanical, less calculated, less resolved. More like Cubist painting, this work contorts perceptual expectations, challenging the viewer to see and experience more, to draw conclusions from ambiguity. In working within the tile format, Bacerra has chosen an aesthetically pleasing, sensuous, and recognizable ceramic genre in which to make decoration come alive.

Ralph Bacerra's "New Dimensions" ceramic wall pieces were shown at Theo Portnoy Gallery, New York (April 16–May 14, 1983).

Sarah Bodine is a freelance writer and editor.

Walter Darby Bannard

Edward Lebow

Walter Darby Bannard eschews tricks and Murphy bed picture spaces. For him painting is the irreducible task of arranging colored pudding on a flat ground. This is nuts and bolts formalism: every pictorial detail is attributable to the pigment's matrimonial fidelity to its underlying surface. No secrets cleave the two. Physical cause leads directly and narrowly to visual effect. Where Bannard smears his acrylic gel thin, for instance, the color yawns light and transparent. Where it stands thick, in pools or modeled ridges, the color is rich with veiling opacity. In this range of physical and visual contrasts he finds his images.

He begins by pouring the paint over large areas, then strokes the ooze with a suitable tool. By stiffening and easing the pressure of his hand, he is able to ripple the color in shallow and deep waves. Since shallow and deep read light and dark, in weak and concentrated hues, this buttering and basting is Bannard's way of achieving the linear rhythms and chiaroscuro gradations he wants. His motifs give the clear impression of having been "drawn." And their impact is occasionally elegant.

Bannard runs into trouble, however, when he hauls these pictorial notions into ceramics. He has done this severasl times in the last few years, first in collaboration with Margie Hughto at the Syracuse Clay Project, and more recently with James Walsh and Ann Igelsrud (former associates of Hughto's), at Clayworks in New York City. Between the two venues he has worked pictorially with clay three times. In each instance he used colored slips and glazes on wet stoneware slabs, working the pasty medium as he might an unctuous paint. Then the slabs were dried and fired.

The painted plaques made in the last year exhibit motifs similar to those found on his canvases. Characterized by arcing and crenated lines, their scalloped ridges of color radiate from a central point toward the edges of each rectangular slab. Around the edges runs a loose framework of impressed or rouletted borders. Bannard concentrates the activity of the picture's surface within these frames.

He limits his palette to one, sometimes two, hospital colors: cadaverous blues, maternity pinks, faecal browns and black, and a gray that is a relieving contrast to the blonde skin of the fired clay. Due to the limited palette and perfunctory tone of the colors, Bannard's handling of the contrasts between color and ground is crucial. In fact, his method is the only drawstring supporting the motifs. With this in mind, he unleashes a ground war of jagged trenches, feathery salients, and thick flanks of pigment wiped like squeegeed slush on a windshield across the terrain. Looking at this topography, one becomes absorbed in the visual character and pace of the marks and the improvisational glee that must have accompanied Bannard's hand into the mud. A hint of the kinetic excitement of live gestures is caught in the juicy and pliant surface.

This is where Bannard's paintings on clay diverge from his works on canvas. The differences between the two media lead inevitably to different visual results.

The clay ground is soft. Given enough moisture and pressure, it has the same plastic qualities as the colored slip. It can be modeled and incised, skimmed lightly, or dug heavily. Its bland skin can be excavated with any number of tools and deposited on top of the pigment. With an eye toward using those possibilities to his pictorial advantage, Bannard plies them joyously.

However, where the clay ground is dredged and left in crusty tatters or marbled smears atop the colored slip, the visual tension evaporates. The "figure" embodied by applications of slip merges with the "ground" of the underlying clay slab. But this is not the imaginary fusion one sees when soft paint is stroked over a resistant cloth, thereby sending an imaginary shudder across its surface and awakening a sense of space. Rather, it is an actual slurry in which the roles of both figure and ground mix in a vitiating sameness. They lose the distinctions that are so vital to an imagined picture space and to the intrigue that Bannard's motifs enjoy on canvas.

But this isn't the end of it. There is no reason why painted plaques have to act like painted canvases. There remains in these works the potential sense of live gesture mentioned earlier. In other words, of carrying from the raw to the fired state the sense of tactile life one finds in the eminent pliability of wet clay. The finished surface has to remain as soft to one's gaze as it was to Bannard's touch.

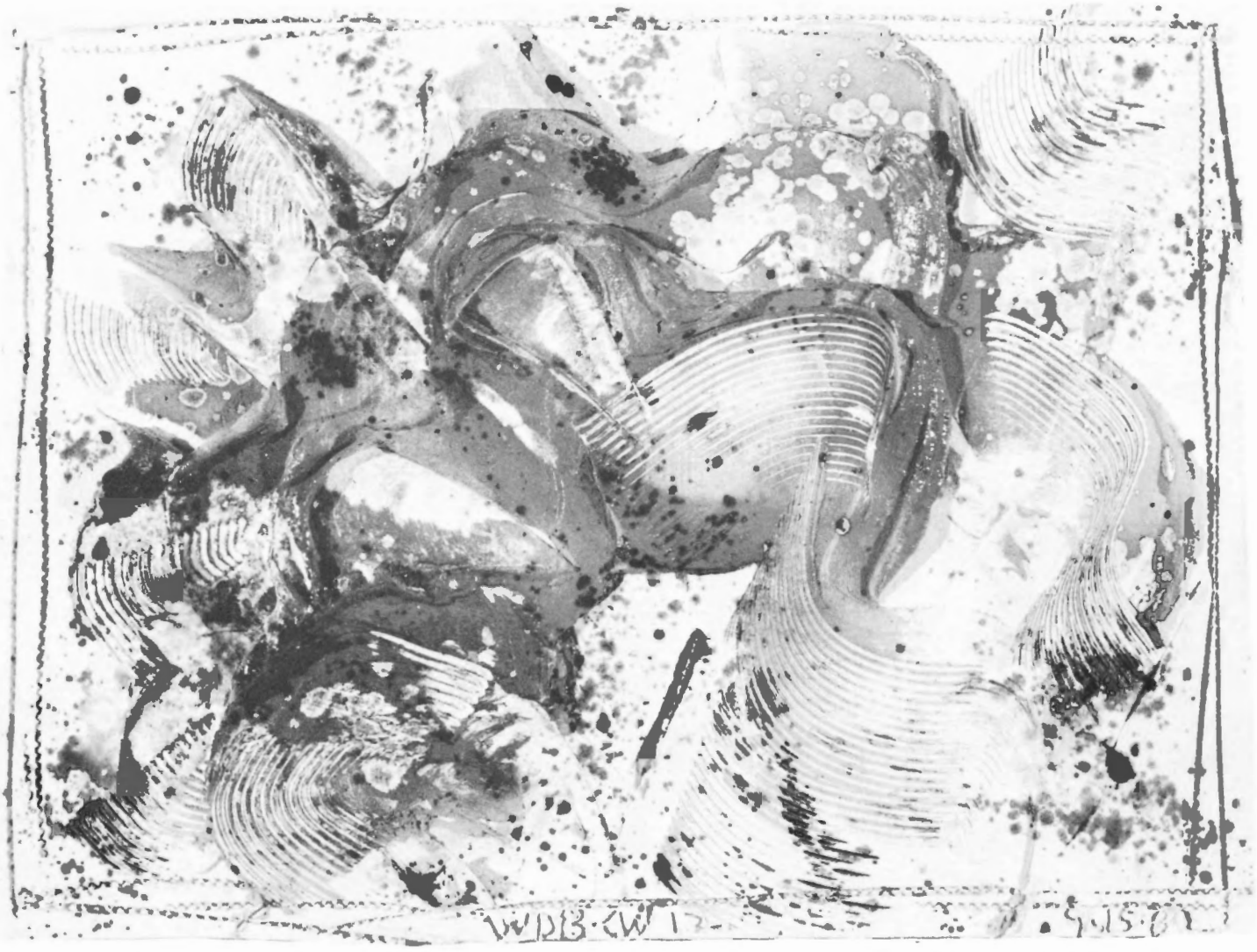
The difficulty of this is evident not only in Bannard's pictures, but also in most of what goes under the heading of "pictorial ceramics." Rummage through the recent examples of the genre and you'll find few successes, and limited ones when they occur. Kenneth Noland is the only painter who has consistently found ways to sustain the life of his surfaces in clay. Bannard petrifies his. The impetuous animation, which may have seemed vital when the clay was wet—the marks still soft and fresh beneath a moist sheen—has dried, been fired, and sadly died of thirst.

It is not simply the appearance of dehydration. If this were the only problem, one could apply a dust of glaze crystals, as Bannard has done, and return the wet look. The real problem is the enormous change that ceramic materials undergo through drying and firing. Colors shift. The clay ground turns from gray green to hayseed, for example, and some glaze pigments undergo similar changes. The entire surface condenses as it transforms from soft to hard.

Artists who don't know those tripsteps by heart tend to stumble through their images. However, the idiosyncracies of the materials don't raise any bumps that can't be smoothed by sufficient familiarity and adjustment. To make images in clay that show more than listless evidence of bygone play, Bannard will have to become as well-versed in the use of ceramic materials as he is in the use of paints and cloth.

Walter Darby Bannard's clay plaques were shown at Clayworks, New York (November 17-December 18, 1982).

Edward Lebow is a freelance writer living in Brooklyn.



CW 12, *20″ (50 cm) high, stoneware, colored porcelain slips, glaze crystals. Collection Barbara Johnson. Courtesy Clayworks Studio Workshop, New York.*

Installation view *(1983). Courtesy Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco.*

Mt. Rose *(1983), 53" (132.5 cm) high, stoneware. Courtesy Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco.*

Robert Brady

Joanne Burstein

In primitive fashion and with a contemporary consciousness, Robert Brady has been spiraling coils of clay for a decade. He has created a body of expressive, figurative work which binds the totemic impersonality of the ancient past with the gestural immediacy of the present. His strangely stiff, yet intimate, figures have not won ready acceptance; and with his new series of large coiled boulders, Brady again amazes.

"What's this, giant burnt potatoes?" puzzled one spectator. Well, yes and no. Brady has never been particularly into "pretty." But in spite of their inorganic dumbness, these boulders are elegant works. In spite of their repellent surface tactility and their uninvitingly dull iron-black color, they are beautiful. Large, gritty black forms with spots and sparkles of strong pink or lilac, the works demand to be taken on their own terms or not at all.

Brady is known as one of the few clay artists working in the figurative tradition. Yet, in his own words, ". . . I'm interested in the figure, but I do not work from it. Rather, my work is about man and the figure."[1] And at roughly five feet high, these works do confront one on a very human scale. All of the forms rise from a narrow base which swells upward and rounds at the top. All possess a buoyancy that belies their mass. Like a group of people, they have subtle character variations among them.

I found myself thinking of these boulders as inorganic cactus-people scattered in the desert. This is not a mere flight of imagination. Brady's cactus reference is clear. These works may look like boulders, but their surfaces present the same regularity of ridge pattern and organic spiral found in cacti. The rough prickly texture is visually rich, but not inviting. Brady's small, pastel color swatches of lilac and pink have the same effect as desert blooms—amazing beauty in desolation. The boulders seem permanent and unchanging, yet the emerging bulges and miniature nodules of the original forms are signs of life, of organic mutability. One piece, *Mt. Rose,* might serve as the signature of this series. Amidst the half legible graffiti scarred into the surface there is visible a rough painting of a rose-pink cactus.

The graffiti marked surfaces of these pieces also refer to a human presence. Like pictographed rocks, they reveal triangles and other notations scratched into the surfaces that invite one to ascribe to them possible significance, hidden meanings. The random scratches interact with the gritty textured skin to balance the references to human intellect, organic vegetation, and timeless rock. Animal, vegetable, or mineral? These works are all three.

The intuitive connection to the historical, if not prehistorical, aspect of clay pervades all of Brady's work. Man has used clay in all cultures and all eras. Its presence in art has no perceivable geographical or chronological boundaries. By moving into the non-figurative realm with this work, Brady shows a confidence in this historical connection and a commitment to its relevance. As for me, I am convinced that I will stumble on one of these works somewhere in the Arizona desert near the Mexican border.

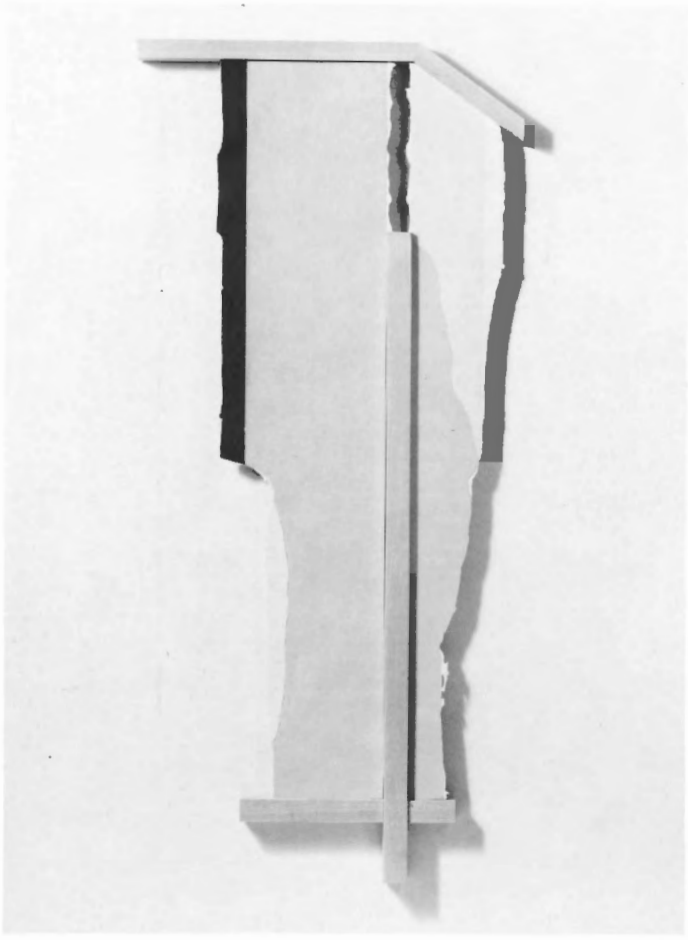
Brady's boulders do what all really good sculpture does—they make you create a perfect location for them in your mind, because a gallery is not adequate to contain them.

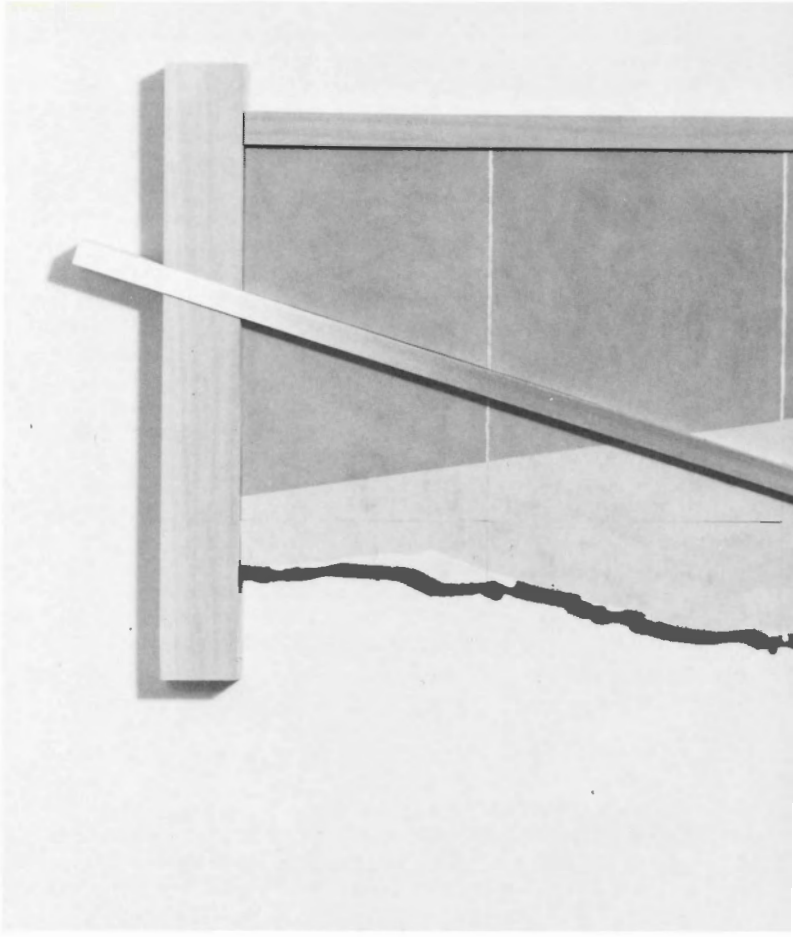
1. Catalogue interview with Thomas H. Garver, Madison Art Center, Madison, Wisconsin, 1982.

Robert Brady's sculptures were seen at Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco (March 1–26, 1983).

Tony Costanzo

Joanne Burstein





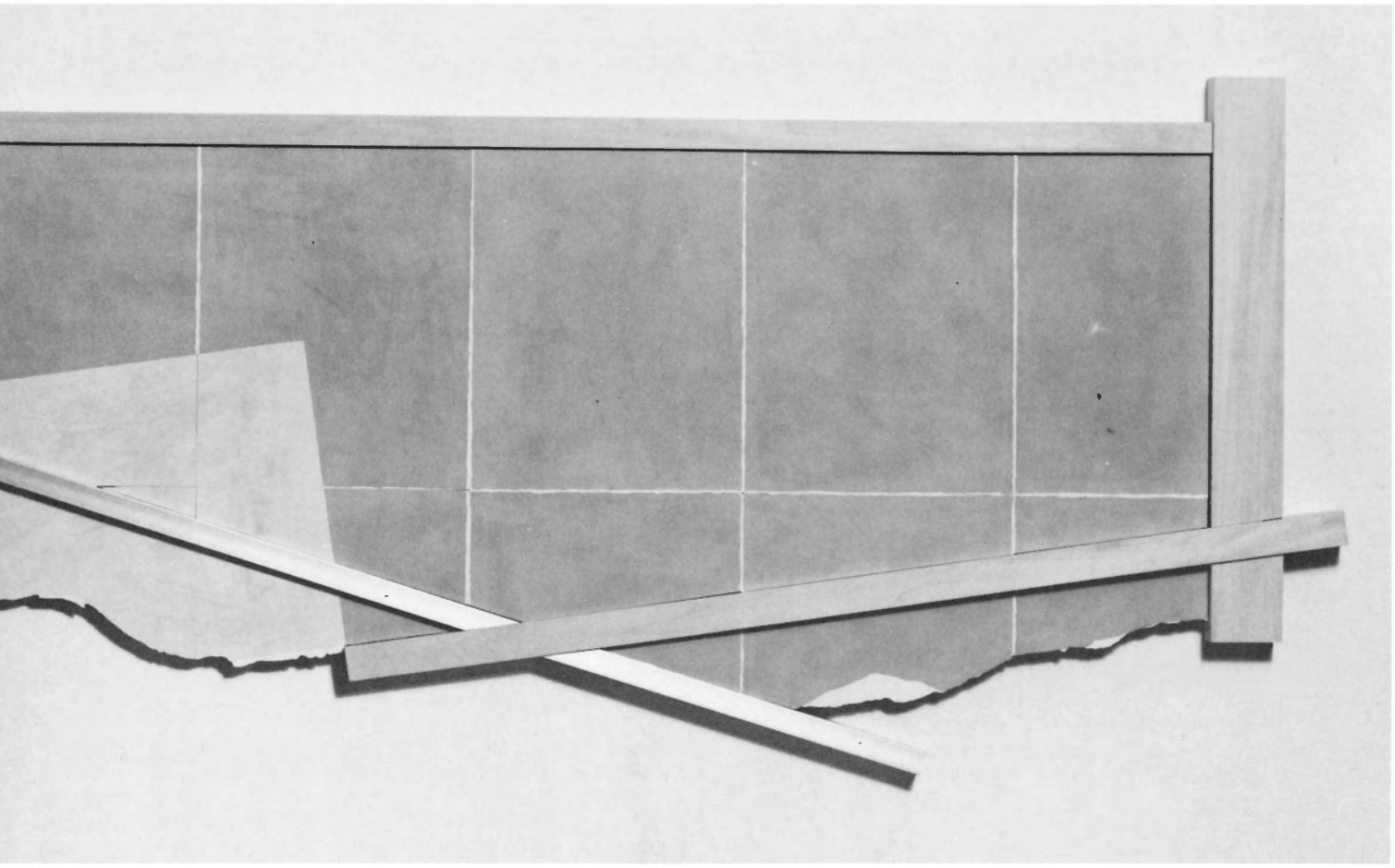
Blonde Roof *(1983), 38¾" x 18" (96.9 x 45 cm), cast slip and wood. Courtesy Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco.*

Gray Slip *(1983), 21¼" x 64" (531 x 160 cm), cast slip and wood. Courtesy Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco.*

Since the mid-seventies, Tony Costanzo has taken the fluid three dimensionality of slip and has cast paper-thin sheets of clay which provide a smooth, fragile surface for pastel pattern paintings. Methodically, he has challenged the restrictions inherent in this process. His recent work indicates a maturing aesthetic vocabulary and a crystallizing artistic vision.

Seen from a distance, Costanzo's large geometric grid constructions are illusionist paintings within the traditions of Modernism. On closer inspection one finds the illusionism to be both figurative and actual. In a very narrow depth of field—one to two inches—Costanzo has created many layered spaces that humorously violate the premise of the orderly geometric grid, amplifying the boundaries between visual and material reality.

In the large works, Costanzo has broken his grids into their individual elements and reassembled them, to create a significant shift upward in scale. He uses his materials sparely, but to maximum advantage, drawing effects from the smooth surface of colored slip and its white torn edge, the wall behind and the shadow cast, the linear wood elements which cut in front and through the primary surface. In *White Brush,* for example, a visually three-dimensional cube is established by the flat slip sheets, with an interior section marked off by real wood framing. What appears three dimensional isn't, while the real wood

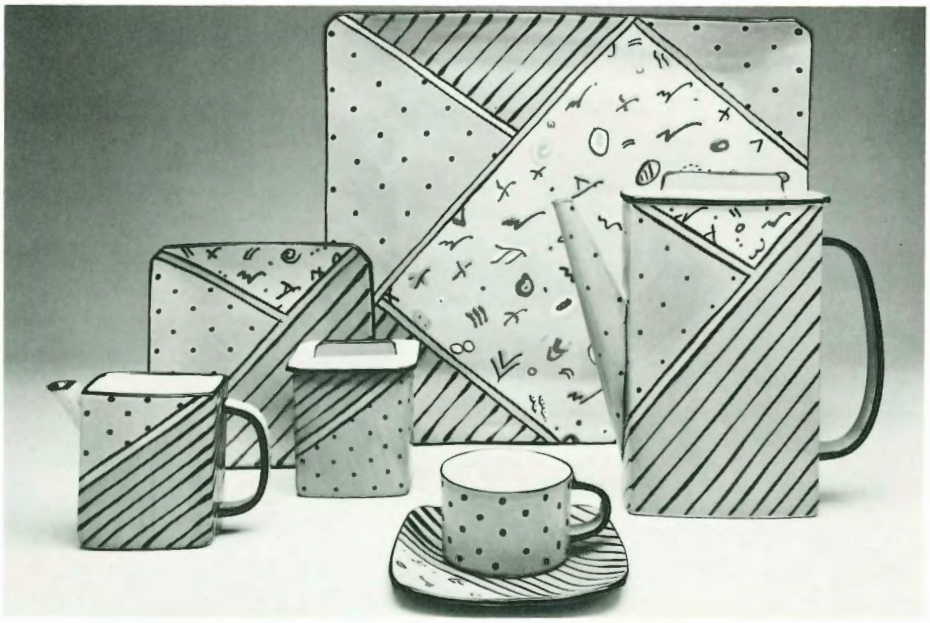


formally flattens the composition.
The ironic appeal of "things not being what they seem" has led Costanzo to a sophisticated and understated tromp l'oeil in these grid pieces. His explicit play between the image and the materials quietly violates our expectations of both: Corners are torn off, proportions shift unexpectedly, modular grids change their spatial relationships by changes in color. Playing with the reality he creates, Costanzo employs a deadpan humor which we receive subliminally long before we see how it's being done.
Despite the success of these grid works, it appears unlikely that Costanzo will allow himself to slide into a formula. In the smaller works, and in the graceful random edges of all the pieces, one can see that the gestural spontaneity of poured slip is still an important aspect of his work. The random flow of the slip creates nonfigurative forms. Like clouds, these might be abstracted into an image, but they have been chosen for their unexpectedness. *Flesh Wound* is a particularly good example of this. The gaping, pale pink tear between the two triangular masses has a quiet drama that allows one both to enjoy the formal qualities and to feel the meaning of the image.
In essence, there are two parallel concerns in this work, and each has been successfully addressed on its own terms. By playing the visual logic of the grid against the expressionist gesture inherent in a material like slip, the work has set up its own dialogue with the creative process. This is a dialogue so personal, one cannot say what will happen next.
Costanzo is one of a current generation of young artists which has what seems to be an intuitive, basic connection to something we now label Modernism. At the same time, their work is informed by the rigorous logic of Minimalism and the expansive Pluralist attitude toward materials and their combinations. It is a very personal approach to very specific issues in our aesthetic tradition. It is too soon to say what its significance will be. But there can be no doubt that it is a genuine issue approaching its maturity.

Sonar *(1983), 17" (42.5 cm) each side. Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Asterisks, *porcelain (1983). Photo: S. Baker Vail.*

Fireflies, Jelly Beans, and Arthur Murray Dance Steps, *porcelain (1981). Photo: S. Baker Vail.*



Dorothy Hafner

Meg Cox

The porcelain dinnerware and platters of Dorothy Hafner are known for their diagonal lines and bold geometric patterns on sleek, barely curved forms. Her latest work seems more confident in its simplification of and experimentation with past themes, and some of her most satisfying pieces reflect a painterly playfulness. The latter includes a series of platters Hafner calls *Postcards Home,* which depict various trips the artist has taken. These are related to her *Take One, Add One* platters for different finger foods—the idea being that when a piece of sushi or candy or whatever is removed, a similar-sized drawing is exposed. The platter is never visually empty.

The *Postcard* platters are similarly square, with rows of individual objects painted inside an outlined grid. Instead of decorative shapes, each little painting represents an object, view, or experience from the trip. The platter for Hafner's trip to Florida is framed by painted palm trees and displays an array of objects: a deck chair, boat, sunglasses, charcoal grill, bicycle, sunset, shuffleboard court, her hotel room blinds, and three fish. An X marked near the fish is meant to signify that these fish were the proverbial "ones that got away." Hafner colors these platters with light purples and deep melons, more pastel in shade and in application, more like watercolors than her usual palette. The style and whimsy of these pieces suggests the kind of cartoonlike narrative one might find on a *New Yorker* cover.

Also in the show is one of the strongest, most original of Hafner's dinnerware patterns, which she named *Fireflies, Jellybeans and Arthur Murray Dance Steps* because her pattern suggested all those things to friends. Like most of her work, the plates, bowls, mugs, and platters in this set are edged with a bold black line that gives them a finished, self-contained look. Though the platters are very nearly flat and the glazes extremely smooth and shiny, Hafner suggests texture through the interaction of patterns, diagonal lines, and colors. There are three patterns on each piece—a white background covered with black, diagonal lines; black signature-like scribbles arrayed in rows against a purple background; and pastel jellybean shapes scattered on black. The distinction between patterns is accentuated by a thick colored or white line, itself edged in black. The effect is akin to the look of planted farmers' fields viewed from the air, with each crop distinct while the broader countryside reveals a whole, harmonious sweep. There is balance in Hafner's work, but never monotony. The black striped lines in this set waver fluidly from thick to thin and the diagonal lines play off the slight curvature of the platter's rim. As with most of Hafner's dinnerware, the various patterns are arranged differently from plate to plate within a set, so that when pieces are stacked, a different pattern will peek out underneath and interact with the design on top. Thus, someone setting a table can participate in the creative process Hafner began.

Since she started making dinnerware some four years ago, Hafner's designs have become more assured and streamlined. Her early *Kyoto Homage* pattern looks almost cluttered beside her more recent work, with its large polka-dot filled square in the center of the plate surrounded by dense diagonal designs in two or three additional patterns. From among that multiplicity of patchwork patterns, Hafner isolated her later *Confetti* design, which is much more striking alone, with its black dashes and multicolored dots against a white background. There's a purity, a classic look to the *Confetti* pattern that reflects Hafner's avowed adoration of the sleek Bauhaus tradition, and yet there's also an energetic, blinking-light aesthetic that seems born of more recent times.

Hafner has also simplified her fine *Fireflies, Jellybeans and Arthur Murray Dance Steps* design in a set she calls *Chevron,* which eliminates two of the three patterns and leaves behind patches of solid color alternating with the black diagonal lines on white. The sections of diagonal lines are themselves separated by diagonals in colors such as soft green and deep melon. Somewhat more complex is her new *Asterisk* pattern, created for a Texas collector, which contains the familiar diagonals but different patterns in combination. There are black diagonal lines on a turquoise field, tiny black dots on lilac, and a jumble of scriptlike marks that resemble dashes and stray punctuation marks, in black and pale orange.

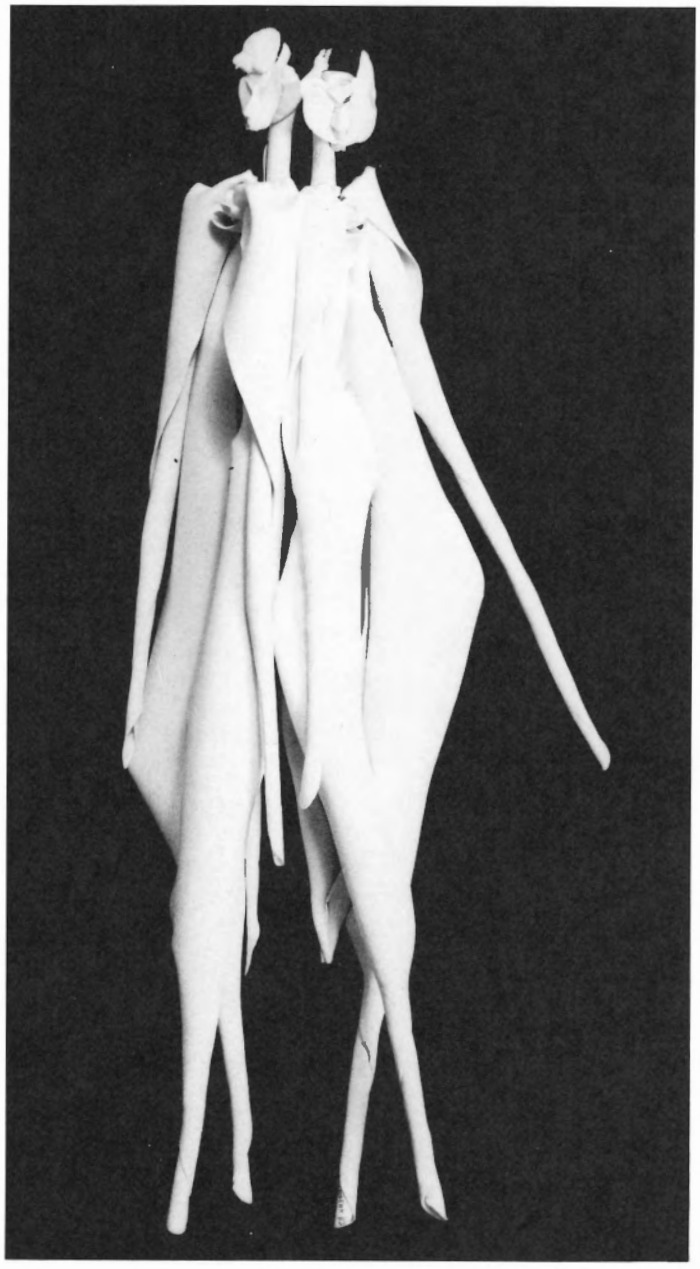
Triangular platters are among Hafner's newest efforts, and the designs shown here seem more strained and tentative than those developed on her traditional forms. She repeats the triangular shape in designs within the platters, often giving a "nesting" effect that deprives the work of the contrast created in her square plates sliced internally by diagonal lines. Still, it is encouraging to see Hafner continue to resist the impulse to slide into a marketplace mentality by reducing her most commercially successful work to formula. It is that very resistance that sets her apart from other ceramists doing production tableware.

Dorothy Hafner's ceramics were exhibited at Martha Schneider Gallery, Highland Park, Illinois (April 30–May 31, 1983).

Meg Cox is a journalist who frequently writes on art; she lives in Chicago.

Lyn Haxton

Joanne Burstein



Gently unfolding, gracefully closing, the porcelain sculptures of Lyn Haxton defy the fragility of their medium and speak instead of its inherent strength. Haxton has isolated the translucency and strength of high-fired porcelain from its traditional application in thrown and cast tableware. Utilizing the plasticity of clay sheets, she forms graceful scrolls and arcs which are combined after firing. This survey covers work from 1978 to the present, and it reveals a formal, aesthetic sensitivity to the interaction of interior and exterior surfaces and to the subleties of repeated and layered forms.

An expert with thin slab porcelain, Haxton has few peers working with this fragile and temperamental technique. Her method is to repeat rolled forms, which reveal their beauty by the slight variations among them and construct an interlocking rhythm of contrasting similarities and differences. In works such as *Culindrus, Ceremonial Voyage,* and *1 Wish 8 Bones* (all 1979), Haxton builds a rhythmic pattern of quite similar rolled forms and then violates our expectations by stacking them higher than seems logically possible or by bending the forms against gravity. While repetition and variation are her inherent themes, Haxton's subject is the strength and plasticity of the porcelain.

In her horizontal series from 1980, the tension among the forms and their interplay of light and dark create an architectural presence. These are very calculated works. Individual spirals of clay were fired separately and then combined in two, three, or four interlocking sections. The simplicity of the individual elements and the intrigue of the new relationships created in their combinations is intelligent and elegant. A fragile gesture creates mass. Scale becomes unhinged. Seeming to exist in no specific space, these works could be any size.

In *Theme and Variations,* a more narrative work, Haxton's play on the unexpected variations of a similar form seems more forced. The piece is comprised of dozens of almost two-foot long tubes. From two sides it appears to be an unfurling fan; from another side it looks like a stack of open ends; from yet another one sees a forest of cylinders. The work is certainly a technical feat, but the spontaneity is overridden by the manifestly programmed intent. A similar failure occurs in Haxton's figurative work, which struggles to connect clay's physical properties with metaphysical human qualities. In both instances, we are given too much, as if the artist has questioned whether anyone is getting the more abstract statement and is actively trying to guide the viewer. If this is a missed step, it is a small one.

When work is based, as Haxton's is, on specific aspects of clay's physical properties and not on overtly figurative or vessel traditions, its content centers on the creation of new forms. As the possibilities are endless and because there are few antecedents, this is an enormous challenge. Haxton manages to hew to a consistent theme, however—the folded and unfolding form, the referent flower/female.

Her touch is delicate; she builds on repeated gesture in a clear and methodical way. By allowing feeling to guide her, a very personal body of work emerges. Haxton clearly intends to encourage a wide-ranging vocabulary within her chosen medium explicating the formal and emotive potential of porcelain's fragile strength.

Lyn Haxton's porcelain works were exhibited at Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California (February 17–March 12, 1983).

Susan and Sylvia *(1982), 22″ (55 cm) high, porcelain. Photo: Charles Frizzell.*

Ceremonial Voyage, *12″ (30 cm) high, porcelain. Photo: Paul Lawrence.*

Untitled *(1982), 24" (60 cm) high, Courtesy Klein Gallery, Chicago. Photo: Rob Micus.*

Untitled *(1982), 20" (50 cm) high, Courtesy Klein Gallery, Chicago. Photo: Rob Micus.*

Jun Kaneko

Janet Koplos

Though Jun Kaneko's background is in painting, his clay work usually exploits three-dimensionality. He is known for rows of three-legged "knots" decorated with hard-edge color, for "walls" of irregular clay sticks assembled by the hundreds, for stacked plates in which the line pattern on the top plate opens to display another pattern on the lower plate. These works employ numerical multiples, physical repetition of the form that extends their impact beyond the limitations of the tangible boundaries that define an object. Repetition not only creates another object, but also creates a relationship between the objects. One plus one equals three.

Other means of achieving the same manifold effect from a single object are through enlarged scale, through association with the human or animal body, through perceptual effect. The last is Kaneko's method here.

He has put his painting background to work to create an illusionistic image that plays off the three-dimensionality of the ceramic form. Each of the ten untitled, wall-hanging plates exhibited at Klein Gallery is a twenty-one by twenty-four-inch ellipsoid with a blotchy concave surface that is mostly maroon, suffused sometimes with patches of black or green. The surface is a background for strongly colored "painted" lines, which play against it in both two and three dimensions. Visually, the splotchy ground negates the surface of the plate, while the sharply delineated and usually lighter-colored lines hover in an indefinite plane of space. Physically, the gritty, crusted ground advances in modest relief from the surface plane, while the lines lie in carved-out channels, reversing the expected relationships of figure and ground. The viewer switches back and forth between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional reading. Although Kaneko has not multiplied the form, he offers multiplicity in perception.

Kaneko complicates perception even further by suggesting optical movement. For example, one plate has alternately glossy and crusty stripes running across its surface. These curve in the opposite direction of a vividly colored off-center spiral line that seems to recede, as if it were viewed obliquely. The two complicated effects join to create a moiré surface movement similar to the optical paintings of Bridget Riley or Richard Anuskiewicz, but without their finesse. Kaneko's patterns have a primitive vitality and rawness, in part because the surface on which they appear has texture and character.

Kaneko's color systems also contribute to the vitality of these plates. The mottled background has a positive/negative effect, particularly in the complementary colors of maroon and green; because neither color dominates, they exist in a fluctuating limbo that expands their visual presence. They suggest depth, and refuse to lie flat on the surface. Kaneko adopts a palette of pink, aqua, yellow, burnt sienna, and black for the lines of color channeled into the surface. The pink, aqua, and yellow have an almost neon visual aggressiveness, moving forward in space. Yet they are light, cool tints; not even the yellow is hot, although it tends to be visually strongest. Kaneko works with the effects of these colors, through width and length of the colored line, through the channeling of the lines to give dimension, and through outlining them in burnt sienna, which amplifies the dimensional effect by making the edges of the lines soft and curved rather than hard and flat. Kaneko also plays with perception by using a predictable line configuration, such as a spiral, but changing colors as the line runs and, in some places, temporarily discontinuing it. The viewer's expectation of continuity "fills in" these blanks. When the line is of several colors of different visual strengths, the effect is a pulsing that is intensified by the relief of the surface and by the concavity of the plates, which casts shadows to complicate and emphasize the relief. The line is jumpy, nervous, thrusting, careening, and never quite predictable. The channeling of line is the artist's gesture, the coloring is his perception.

Kaneko also showed a seven-foot-high enclosure of clay "lumber" called *Parallel Sounds.* The enclosure is diamond shaped, with the bars of aqua, glazed clay stacking alternately at the corners, log-cabin fashion. Light enters between the bars, casting complicated shadow patterns in counterpoint to the bars' rhythmic repetition. Higher, wider, deeper than a person, the scale of the piece gives it the impact of an environment. But it is not intimidating because one can relate to the modest proportions of the individual elements. *Parallel Sounds* was also shown in the Mile of Sculpture at Chicago's Art Expo; there, spotlighted in the dim warehouse space, it came to life through color and surface. The focusing of light on the aqua glaze gave the work a glittering, floating, expanding presence. Its impact was pervasive. Here again, as in so much of Kaneko's work, the object is not an object, but a visual field.

Ceramics by Jun Kaneko were exhibited at Klein Gallery, Chicago (March 25–April 23, 1983).

Janet Koplos is a contributing editor to The New Art Examiner.

Geoffrey Pagen

Louise Klemperer

An exhibition of recent clay wall-reliefs by Geoffrey Pagen included massive slabs, hung singly or placed next to each other in an extended series, and small rectangular bars (about eight inches in height) hung alone or in groups of two or three, each bar set at an angle so that the length of its corner edge jutted out from the wall. At first glance, the imagery suggested natural objects: the uneven outer edges and occasional cracks that shot or meandered across the slabs seemed rocklike, as did the rough surfaces of the bars. Or, if these elements called to mind the earth's surface seen from high above, the various configurations of white and dark markings on the unglazed areas resembled masses and filaments of cloud. This imagery brought forth associations of the transitory, ever-changing appearance of natural phenomena. But then the areas of thickly applied, brilliant raku colors—arranged as clearly delineated stripes of yellow, red, or turquoise, or as larger, straight sided shapes of turquoise or shiny black—announced their presence. These brightly colored, precisely laid out lines and forms evoked the abstract realm of geometric concept and the unchanging world of the ideal, as well as the abstract format of many twentieth-century paintings with their hard-edged shapes or lines.

In most of these new pieces, Pagen achieved a rich complexity, enhanced by the tension of contradictory presences brought into dialogue with each other. However, in a few works, the painting references so dominate the composition that the rough clay surface become a hindrance instead of an important part of the statement.

In looking at the most successful of the new pieces, one sees that Pagen has begun to resolve a long-standing difficulty: what to do with several compelling, but undigested, conflicting aesthetics. There have been a series of initially unprocessed influences which have contributed to this difficulty. Pagen began his undergraduate work in ceramics at the University of Puget Sound, where the emphasis was on wheel-thrown, functional stoneware vessels. Then he studied with Jun Kaneko at Rhode Island School of Design (M.F.A. '75), exploring bright colors and a more art-oriented approach to clay. Several years later, a three-month visit to Japan, and a two-month visit to Mayan ruins in central America the following year, completed the varied ingredients of Pagen's aesthetic background.

When first on his own, Pagen dropped the bright colors and made stoneware platters, glazed in earthy, matt slips and glazes. Often an X, a square, or other geometric form would be scratched, glazed, or built onto the platter. He also made wheel-thrown vase forms or cylindrical bases which he would finish with irregular, handbuilt tops. (He has continued with these forms, and some of them appeared in the recent show. Unfortunately, they have not evolved nearly as much as the two-dimensional work.) At that point in Pagen's development, the various visual ingredients just didn't fit together within the format he had constructed. It wasn't a question of tension or conflict between the various elements, it was more that at some basic level all the parts simply did not relate to each other.

For a solo exhibition early in 1981, Pagen finally put his platters aside and made a series of slabs. When these blew up in the firing, he exhibited the shards. Shards were also present at his next solo show the following winter at Reed College. He felt these broken fragments called to mind ancient shards of great historical significance: All that was called to my mind was an unfortunate kiln accident. In retrospect, I see that the irregular shapes of the fragments were important forerunners and have reappeared many times in Pagen's subsequent work.

For the Reed College show Pagen built more slabs, their outer edges shaped somewhat like the shards. He added two dimensional rectangles to the surfaces either by subtle folds in the clay, or by painting on slips, and for the first time his geometric forms worked with the other elements present. The pieces seemed Japanese-like in their emphasis on groggy raw clay's ability to crack into interesting jagged edges, in the varied thick slip textures, and in a certain elemental simplicity. And yet the Japanese sense of ultimate harmony was not present—Pagen's work was very Western in that the final effect was an excitement from the tensions generated by the contrasts, and by the geometric forms' intense relationships to each other and to the outer edges of the slabs.

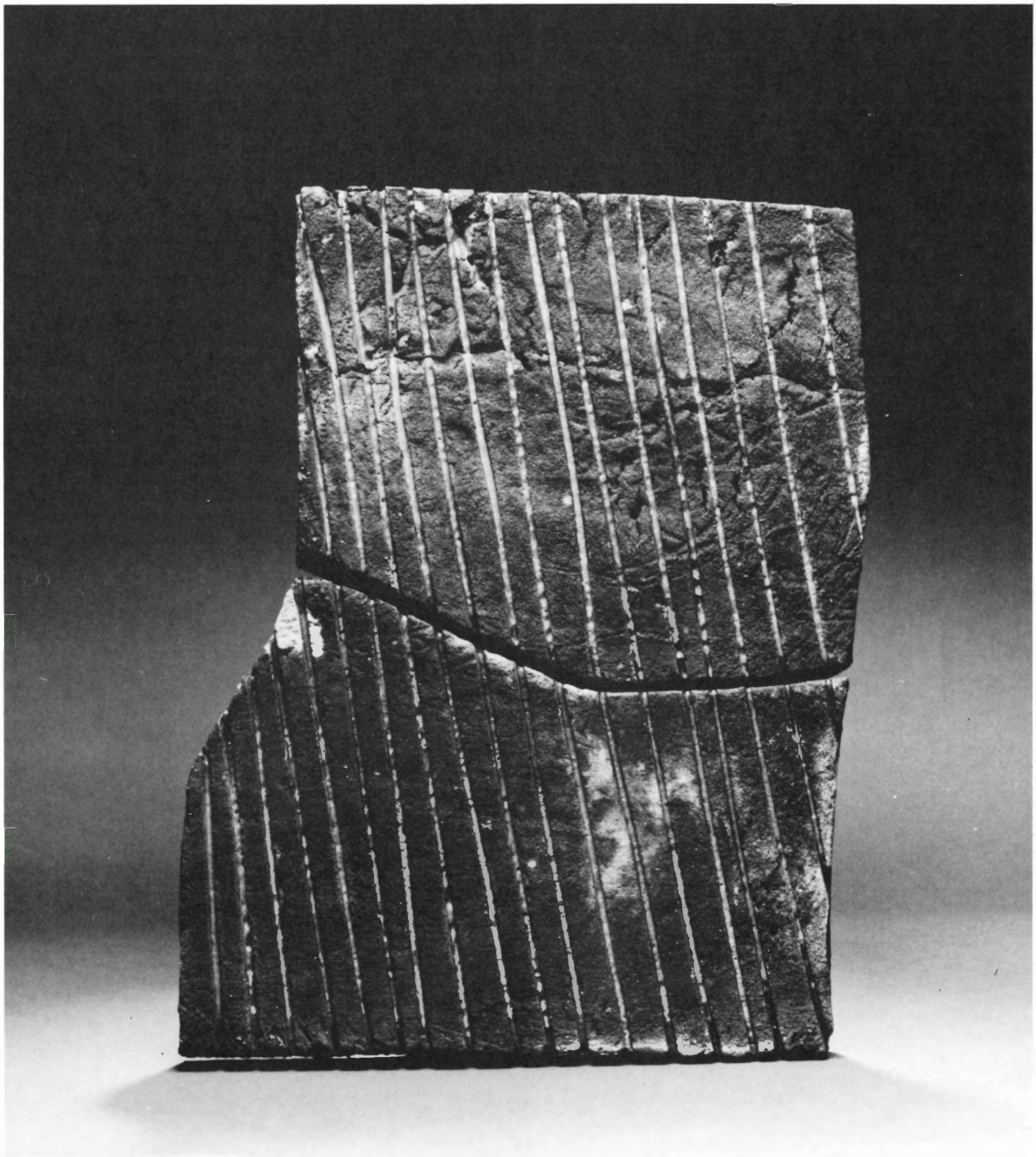
Pagen continued with these forms, adding refinements but not major modifications, until early 1983. Then, by supplementing his visual vocabulary with lines and bright colors, Pagen has enriched both the work's appearance and the series of associations it triggers in the viewer's mind. An intense vitality which has been slowly growing since 1981 and the appearance of the first shard series, is very evident in this new work: It augers well for work yet to come.

Geoffrey Pagen's work was exhibited at the Lawrence Gallery in downtown Portland, Oregon (May 4–29, 1983).

Louise Klemperer is a freelance critic living in Portland, Oregon.

Raku Slab Panel *(1983), 22" x 84" (55 x 210 cm). Photo: C. Bruce Forster.*

Raku Diptych *(1983), 20" (50 cm) high. Photo: C. Bruce Forster.*



Teapot *(1982), porcelain. Photo: Nancy Hirsch.*

Bowl with Stand *(1982), 11½" (28.75 cm) high, porcelain. Photo: Nancy Hirsh.*

Adrian Saxe

Ed Forde

Adrian Saxe's recent exhibition at the Garth Clark Gallery in Los Angeles inevitably drew much adulation. The work is dazzling. Its visual and technical excesses are surfeit to even the most gluttonous of ceramic appetites. In his numerous stylistic signatures, the antelope jar and the saw-toothed lipped bowl, Saxe flexes every muscle of his technical virtuosity. The viewer surrenders to a sensual seduction that is unparalleled ceramic hedonism.

Saxe pursues material qualities of the medium to new technical limits. As a master craftsman of high-fire porcelain, he has few peers. All his forms employ a layering or bodily division of form into base, body (torso), and defined top or crown. This is the primary equation of his visual theory, a sort of artistic numerology of distinctly different elements searching for that mystical combination. The separate body parts may or may not be conventionally related. Rather, they are often a collection of singular eclectic elements similar in effect to the composite approach of such Post-Modern architects as Michael Graves. The bases make organic allusions, the bodies more painterly and graphic statements, while the tops remain figurative elements. The visual pluralism conveys the incongruity of contemporary experience, like our ability to digest *Masterpiece Theater,* professional football, and *Sixty Minutes* in an average night of television. If our contemporary world does not have a linear coherence, at least our art forms can reflect the disparity.

Saxe's work does present some problems. The sensory effectiveness of his pieces is so sublime as to discourage a more objective approach to the images. Maintaining a critical distance while feasting on such precious surfaces and perfect detailing, as in the exquisite miniature antelopes, is difficult. The work is sometimes too rich, obsessed with technical virtuosity and the fetish of quality. And despite the variety of elements within each piece, the ultimate rendering of each portion tends to assign the same volume to every part of each work. There is a lack of shading or tonal range. Even the understatements are conspicuous in their perfect self-containment. Subtleties are overpowered by this monolithic control, and a great self-consciousness takes over. Every hair is in place; the rough edges sometimes left by the mysterious cutting force of potent artwork are muted here.

The pluralism of Post-Modern art has embraced many forms of decorative imagery. But as much as we might yearn for a return to the simple universal order of the earlier decorative arts, we cannot deny the complexities of our contemporary world. Saxe's work is escapism, albeit poetic escapism with significant allusions to multiple histories of form and gesture. One of his best accomplishments is the synthesis of historically different, even disparate, references. He is a modern-day Fabergé, with a yearning to situate his work in a larger scheme of European art traditions and current concerns. To do so he must relax his excessive control and order. Perhaps a release from these stylistic fixations with Deco history will help him realize the more contemporary aspirations of his imagery.

Adrian Saxe's recent ceramic sculpture was exhibited at Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles (November 13–December 4, 1982) and at The Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York (January 1983).

Ed Forde is an artist and writer who teaches at California State University, Los Angeles.

John Stephenson

Martha Keller

Clay Outside the Vessel, John Stephenson's recent seven-year retrospective at the University of Michigan, emphasized two main thrusts: wallworks and a new blocky "core series" that he calls "trigons." Also shown were polished, pristine Bauhausian "boxes," playing on the dimensional perception of cubic forms, and comma-shaped forms cantilevered on iron rods.

Whether by temperament or circumstance, artists generally choose between the broad brush approach typified by Picasso and the narrow brush approach, of which Mondrian is an archetypical example. Mondrian moved toward a "purposeful clarity," toward ever-increasing abstraction and universality, toward a reductionist purity of form; while Picasso staged revolutions and counter-revolutions within his oeuvre and seemed obsessed with having to say it *all.* He achieved his universality through a kind of profusion, an expansionist plurality of forms. Unlike Picasso, Stephenson works nonobjectively. But he is working toward that same expansionist plurality of perspective, circling *around* rather than *within* his thesis statement, like Mondrian. As his wallworks show, he can climb through a series theme exhaustively; but he settles at times for lesser leaps, in this strategy of gaining multi-perspectival views of his collective cultural project.

Viewed from a distance, the wallworks look and function like paintings. Some of their interior "frames," the supporting wood or metal interior structures, are highly burnished or brightly painted in clear hues of high saturation (a tangy turquoise in one case), which adds to their gemlike focal clarity. In these works, Stephenson uses color with appropriate weight and emphasis, letting the frame carry the color effect on some occasions and the clay glazing on others. *Barb* registered its bright yellow, low-fire colors against black, through a transition of grays and yellow or orangey browns. *Barb*'s skeletal metal frame sets up the core design statement that the clay reiterates and extends in triangular "wings" that erupt along this core. The leading left edge of the metal frame bar is spray-painted a light yellow, echoing in high contrast against black the extremes stated in a gradation through the clay glaze, where a clear ringing yellow at the "wing-tips" registers as a joyous dominant hue.

In *Barb,* as in most of the wallworks, Stephenson unites clay and metal through an insightful interplay of both their hard and soft qualities. Joined together in the finished work, the synthesis of materials exceeds their individual potential. Stephenson plans to experiment with canvas and other soft-sculptural materials in place of or along with the clay. Certainly, the wallworks, as a series, hold continuing and even increasing potential for development. They now function as clusters or constellations, but could easily move out in any direction. Stephenson acknowledges the influence of the Japanese aesthetic of hard and soft interplay. He also mentioned to me the influence of Gaudí felt during his sojourn in Spain, especially Gaudí's technique of hanging and tying ceramic pieces to cement.

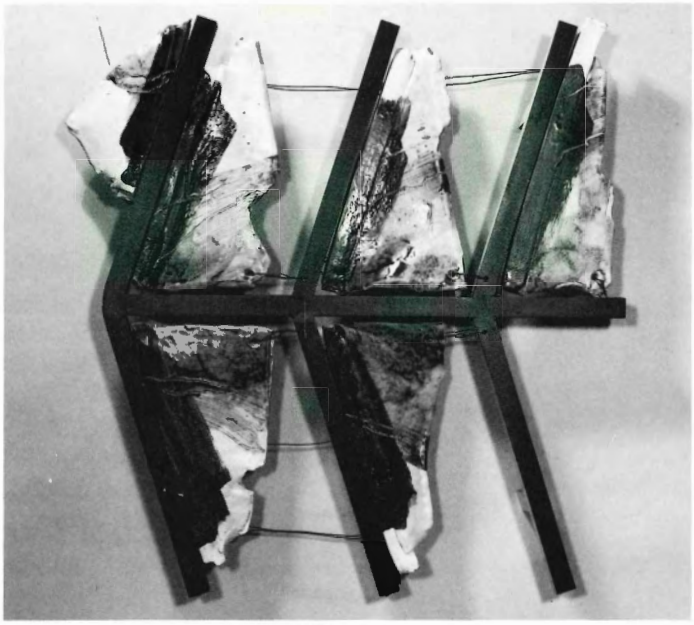
In the wallworks particularly, but also in the cantilevered "comma" shapes, Stephenson is exploring connectives. He uses wires with loops on the end to tie the clay to metal, or he uses bolts or epoxy to attach it to flanges. The visibility of these connectives varies. The wires contribute linear detail and add a decorative flourish; the epoxied joins contribute to the overall look through their invisibility.

As mentioned, the trigons are Stephenson's most recent series under development. Here the angular joining of three L-shapes forms a cornered, boxlike structure, which is joined to another similar structure to make a kind of expanded cubic form around an empty rounded "core." Stephenson sets the trigons in various orientations and calls one such horizontal orientation a "bridge." Viewed from one end, the structure looks like a doughnut with outer corners forming a hexagon. The form undergoes a radical, intriguing change in appearance as you move around it and as it is moved from a horizontal to a vertical position. These trigons work within the hard/soft aesthetic mentioned above; but in terms of the two- and three-dimension conceptual base, they are much more limited than the wallworks, confined as they are to mostly

Barb, *2½" (88.75 cm) high, clay on welded aluminum armature.*

Cell 1-83-F-4, *16" (40 cm) diameter, clay sphere enclosed in a spherical iron cage.*

Core #4 1-83-F-5, *15½" (38.75 cm) high.*



sculptural effect. So far, the surface effects of color or glaze merely modify the cubic feeling in subtle ways, rather than significantly affecting the surface/form interaction.

A number of works in the show combined clay with iron rod in a line/plane or line/volume dialectic. The iron rod works as a kind of interactive support or armature in a more sculptural way than the wallworks incorporate their interior "frames." In these in-the-round works, displayed on pedestals, the iron rod structure meanders through the clay and makes supporting contact with the "floor," the plane of the pedestal. In *Initial Appearance,* a rectilinear plane is outlined by the rod, and this space is pierced three-dimensionally by an up-rising shaft of clay supported by a diagonal rod. In *Floating Wire,* a horizontal wire is allowed to "float" from its suspension rod against a leaning slab, the surface of which is combed or raked in furrows. The suspending loop of rod emerges through a slot near the upper margin of the slab. The supporting rod frame supports the slab as though it were a table-top photo frame. The overall effect is Zen-like: austere, restrained, mysterious and clear at the same time, elegant yet rugged, confined yet free. These free-standing clay/rod pieces have another Zen quality—they work so well visually that they become almost invisible and incidental, in the way that important habitual events in one's daily life become incidental through adaptive accommodation. A work like *Floating Wire* reflects on the coherence of the adaptation, and hints at the profound meaning within such accommodation.

Two large clay spheres added a dramatic accent to the exhibition. One, titled *Cell,* lay within an encircling iron rod cage on the floor. Another large sphere, about twenty inches in diameter, consisted of a compressed coil wound with a large industrial-type rope around its indentations and suspended from the ceiling in a narrow passage between two free-standing wall units. The sphere was "framed" by these wall units, very dramatically, like parting curtains on a stage. Looking almost barnacle-encrusted with its surface of gritty slip, the sphere could be approached at eye level and, with an ear pressed against the coil, one could hear a roar, more amplified than that of the usual seashell. The spheres and trigons have an industrial look somewhat reminiscent of enlarged Oldenburg-like hardware that has grown rusty or mud encrusted. I'm not suggesting they have a Pop Art feeling—they're more austere than that. They approach a Mondrian-like purity of form, more than does anything else in this show, except possibly the boxes, which play on the perceptual illusion of three-dimensional cubes when their cut-out corners were viewed from a particular perspective.

Broad as is the range of work here, all of it worked except for two linear-looking wall pieces made of rhythms of modular extruded clay. These seemed anachronistic, unnecessary to the flow of conceptual content in the other wallworks. For me, the wallworks are Stephenson's major statement and contribution to date. They're innovative in concept. With their deliberately ambiguous dimensionality, they almost make sculpture painting. And their goal, too, is innovative—to display clay as a free-form wall structure, as architecture on architecture.

My only other quibble is with a detail of the installation. Works weren't dated on the title cards, so a casual viewer could not reconstruct lines of development. It's as though Stephenson were so conscious of the overall look that he treated this show of "works outside the vessel" as a vessel in itself, articulating the "sphere" of the exhibition space at the expense of the viewer's natural need to sense chronological continuities. Overall, however, the exhibition was a masterful contribution to the medium by a major practitioner at the height of his powers.

"Clay Outside the Vessel" was held at Slusser Gallery, University of Michigan School of Art (January 27–February 18, 1983).

Martha Keller is a painter, an art columnist for the Ann Arbor News, *and a freelance critic who has written for the* New Art Examiner, Heresies, *and other journals.*

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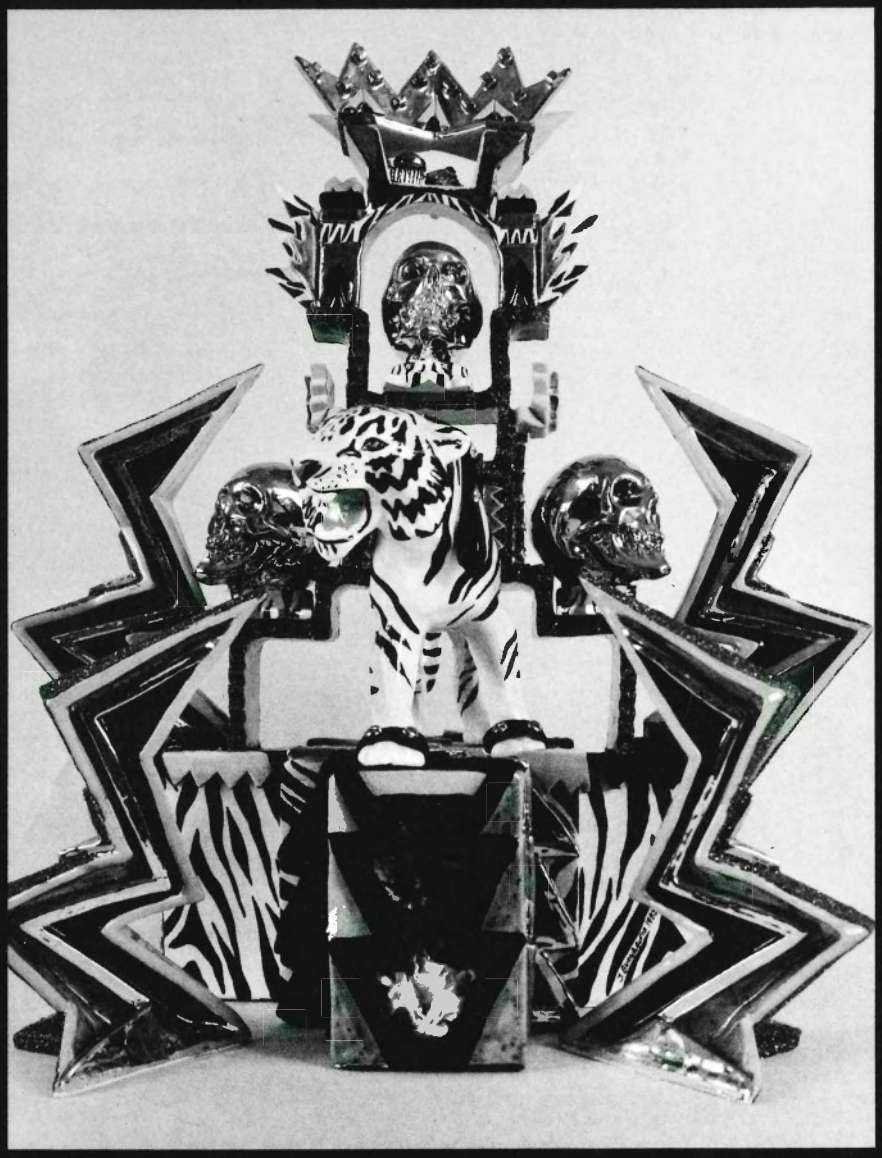

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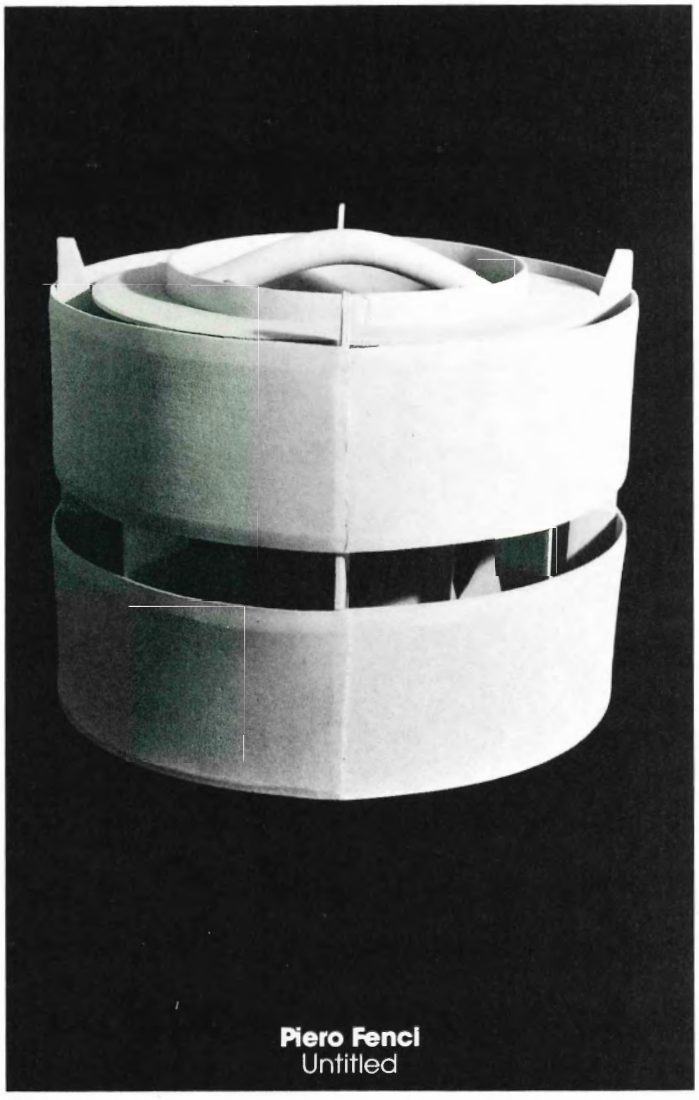

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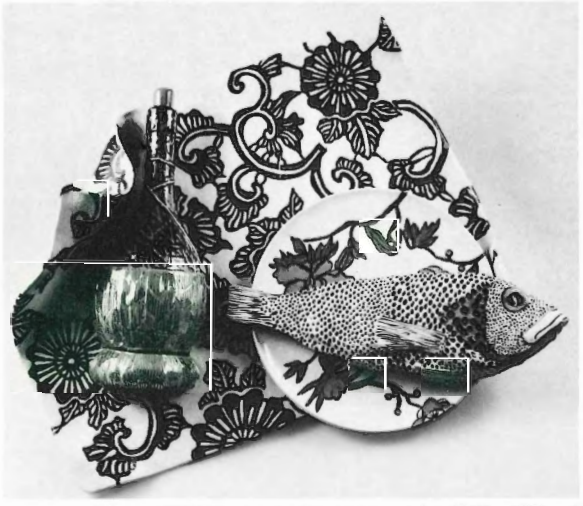

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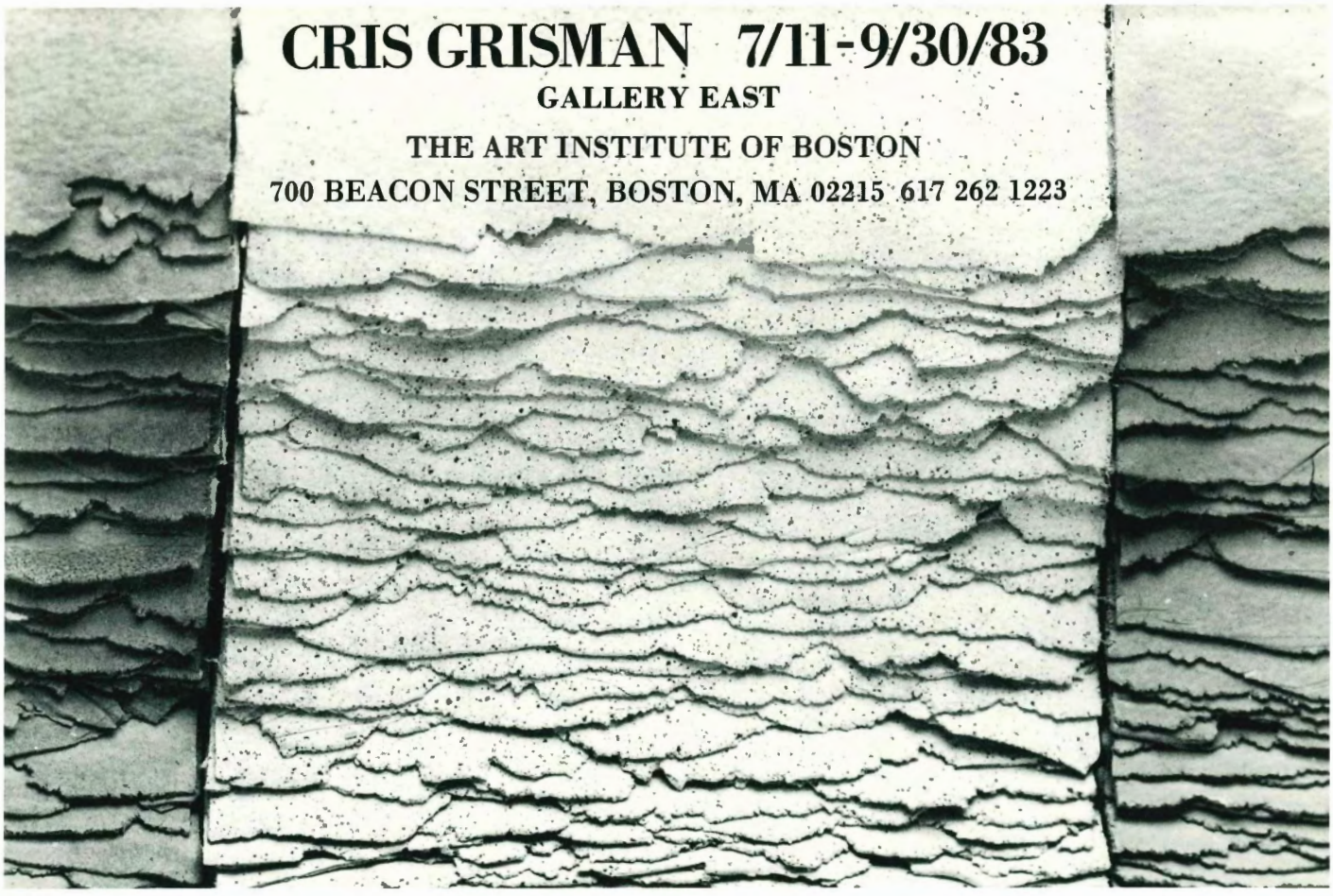

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Cincinnati, OH 45202
513 381 1667

The Private Collection

New Work
Wayne L. Bates
October 8-29, 1983

Brentwood Gallery

Jack Earl — September
Then and Now

New New York — October
Haring, Scharf, DePalma, Futura 2000

Joe Zucker — November
Paintings and Drawings

Bill Stewart
Ceramic Kingdoms

Thom Bohnert — December
Expanded Vessels

Art to Wear

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FINE ART FROM CRAFT MEDIA

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UPTOWN/965 MADISON AVENUE/988-7116

OCTOBER 9 - NOVEMBER 6
TIMOTHY MOORE - NEW WORKS
NOVEMBER 6 - DECEMBER 4
A DECORATIVE MODE
BETH CHANGSTROM
STEVE SCHREPFERMAN

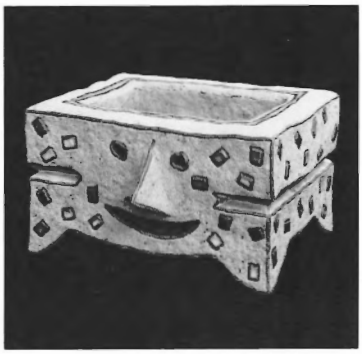
RODELL/RETREAT GALLERY
11714 SAN VICENTE BLVD., LOS ANGELES, CA 90049
213-820-8972

OCTOBER 14 - NOVEMBER 13
SCAPES: FABRIC and CLAY
BERNIE ROWELL
NANCY VALK
NOVEMBER 18 - JANUARY 7
THE GREAT AMERICAN TEA PARTY
INTRODUCING JEWELRY
BY LEE ANGELO MARRACCINI

THE RETREAT
3865 E. THOUSAND OAKS BLVD., WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CA 91362
805-496-7615

DONNA POLSENO
September

In the sales gallery we have recently added work by Anne Currier, Cliff Garten, Chris Gustin, Jane Heaven, Woody Hughes, Jim Makins, Karen Massaro and Jamie Walker.



TOM KERRIGAN
October

By Design
Lumber Exchange
10 South 5th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612-333-2204

REPRESENTING

: WAYNE BATES
: HARRIET BELLOWS
: MARVIN BJURLIN
: CLAUDE CONOVER
: DON CORNET
: KRIS COX
: JOHN DONOGHUE
: DOROTHY HAFNER
: GINA HALPERN
: THOMAS HOADLEY
: DONNA POLSENO
: DICK STUDLEY
: KURT WEISER

SWAN GALLERIES

Sign of the Swan, 8433 Germantown Avenue, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA 19118
Swan Gallery, 132 South 18th Street, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Contemporary Crafts For the Discerning Collector

America House Gallery
24 Washington Avenue, Tenafly, New Jersey 07670
(201) 569-2526

Jackie Chalkley Gallery
3301 New Mexico Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 686-8882

Clay and Fiber
North Pueblo Road, Taos, New Mexico 87571
(505) 758-8093

Contemporary Crafts
3934 S.W. Corbett Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97201
(503) 223-2654

Elizabeth Fortner Gallery
1114 State St., Studio 9-La Arcada Ct., Santa Barbara, California 93101
(805) 966-2613

Gallery Eight
7464 Girard Avenue, La Jolla, California 92037
(714) 454-9781

Incorporated Gallery
1200 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10028
(212) 831-4466

Mariposa Gallery
113 Romero, Northwest - Old Town, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104
(505) 842-9097

Marcia Rodell Gallery
11714 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90049
(213) 820-8972

Ten Arrow Gallery/Shop
10 Arrow Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
(617) 876-1117

Gayle Willson Gallery
42B Jobs Lane, Southampton, New York 11968
(516) 283-7430

The Works Gallery
319 South Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19147
(215) 922-7775

Clay in Boston

Lidya Buzio
Richard DeVore
Harvey Goldman
Margie Hughto
John Mason
Jerry Rothman
Adrian Saxe
Anne Smith
Paul Soldner
Peter Voulkos
Betty Woodman

Thomas Segal Gallery

73 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116
Tel (617) 266-3500
Tues-Sat, 10 to 5:30 or by appt

MICHAEL GROSS
SEPTEMBER 10-OCTOBER 12
Opening reception September 10

THE BOARDWALK
PAINTED WOOD & CERAMIC
PHOTO: MELVILLE D. McLEAN

OBJECTS GALLERY
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312 664 6622

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH CERAMICS

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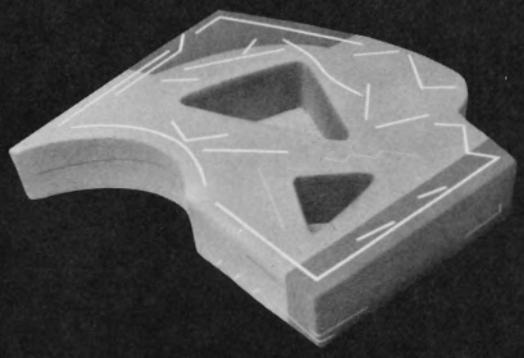
Nick Homoky
David Leach
Eileen Nisbet
Jacqueline Poncelet
Lucie Rie
Mary Rogers
Geoffrey Swindell

Westminster Gallery

132A Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116

(617) 266-6704
Tuesday-Saturday 11-6

RAYE FORE
CERAMICS



CERAMIC FORM DIMENSIONS: 8⅛" x 8⅛" x 1⅝"

DBR GALLERY

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FINE
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CRAFTS
& WEARABLES

jackie chalkley

SYLVIA BOWER
september 10 - september 24

JACKIE GREEVES
september 10 - september 24

DAVE WILLIAMSON
october 1 - october 15

jackie chalkley

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Wall Piece 29" H x 19" W

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November 10 – December 3, 1983

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(212) 226-5910

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CARP VASE
FRANK BOYDEN
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DANIEL CRICHTON

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September 20-30

JOHN CHALKE

recent ceramics
October 4-15

"reversed provincial map."
19½" x 14½" x 2" wall piece

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Thomas P. Hubert
Ceramic Paintings & Vessels
July 4-28

Baltimore Clayworks
August 1-September 15

Urban Pulses:
Robert Milnes
Clayworks
October 8-November 3

Anne Shattuck
Salt Glazed Porcelains
November 7-December 1

THE CLAY PLACE

The Clay Place Gallery
5600 Walnut Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232
(412) 441-3799

October 13-November 11

ROBERT TURNER

Dorry Gates Gallery
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816 523 4403

david leach

and three texas friends:
Daphne Hatcher
Gary Hatcher
Elmer Taylor

october 15 to 27
1983

the
frontroom gallery
6617 snider plaza
dallas, texas 75205
(214) 369-8338

WISCONSIN CERAMIC SHOWCASE

September 24
October 19, 1983

Preview Reception
September 24, 5-8 p.m.
to Meet the Artists:

Laurie Berke
Bebe Berkoff
Sandra Beyers
Wayne Fischer
Michael Gross
Karen Gunderman
Christine LePage
Marjorie Mau
Susan Potts
William Reid
Lori Woodruff

Send $22.50 for a selection of twenty-two slides reproducing two works by each artist.

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SPOTLIGHT '83
selections from the American Craft Council Southeastern Regional Craft Competition, held at Sawtooth Center for Visual Design, June, 1983

Children's Museum of Oak Ridge
Oak Ridge, TN
Sept. 6-Oct. 9, 1983

Milledgeville Allied Arts
Milledgeville, GA
Oct. 25-Nov. 27, 1983

Bank of the Arts Gallery
New Bern, NC
Dec. 13, 1983-Jan. 15, 1984

Albany Museum of Art
Albany, GA
Jan. 31-March 4, 1984

Colquitt County Arts Council
Moultrie, GA
March 20-April 22, 1984

Anderson County Art Center
Anderson, SC
May 8-June 10, 1984

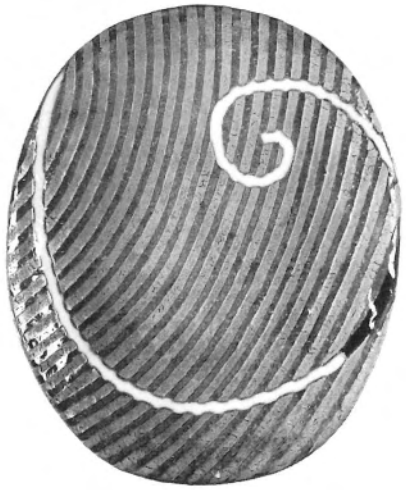
North Carolina State University
Craft Center Gallery
Raleigh, NC
June 26-July 29, 1984

Museum of Arts & Sciences
Macon, GA
Aug. 14-Sept. 16, 1984

Juror: Gerhardt Knodel
Circulated by the Southern Arts Federation
1401 Peachtree St., NE, Suite 122
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-874-7244

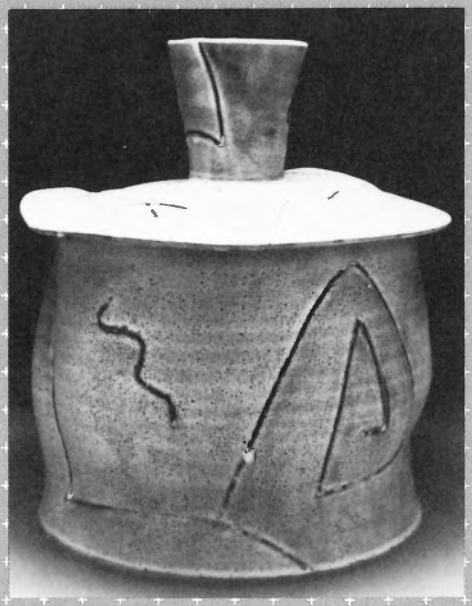
Y A W
GALLERY

JUN KANEKO
Clay & Drawings
September 16-October 16



550 N. Woodward Ave., Birmingham, Michigan 48011
313/647-5470

CHRIS GUSTIN
OCTOBER 14 THRU NOVEMBER
Opening reception October 14



COVERED JAR
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OBJECTS GALLERY
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RICK DILLINGHAM
NOV. 19-DEC. 14

NINA FREUDENHEIM GALLERY
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CLAY 10

- *Susan Crowell*
- *Kathy Dambach*
- *Rafael A Duran*
- *James Leacock*
- *Thomas Phardel*
- *John Stephenson*
- *Susanne Stephenson*
- *Shirley White/Black*
- *Marie Woo*
- *Georgette Zirbes*

November 26-December 30

DETROIT FOCUS

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Detroit, Michigan 48226
313 962 9025
Wednesday-Saturday 12 to 6pm

JOHN FRISENDA

RICK HIRSCH

SEPT 10-OCT 9

CRAFT COMPANY NO. 6

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ROCHESTER, NY 14607
716-473-3413

Call for Entries

Open Juried Competition

California Clay '84

April 4 through May 20, 1984

$2500

Cash and Purchase Awards

Receiving–
March 14, 15, 16

Jury–

Catherine Hiersoux
Daniel Rhodes
John Toki
$10 for up to 3 entries

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(415) 943-5866

Sponsored by–
Civic Arts Gallery and the Clay Arts Guild
of the City of Walnut Creek

Handcrafters Gallery

227 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505/982-4880

44 Exchange Street
Portland, ME 04101
207/772-4880

Sylvia Bower
Carolyn Brice Brooks
J. David Broudo
Jamie Davis
Larry Elsner
Nina Gaby
Diana Goudy
Catherine Hiersoux
Ted Keller
Harold Littlebird
Ted Lobinger
Elizabeth MacDonald
Nancee Meeker
Louis Mendez
David Nelson
Caryn Ostrowe
Harvey Sadow
Curtis Scott
Sally Silberberg
Eilene Sky
Jeanne Sollman Stevens
Natalie Surving
Jeffrey Zigulis

RICK FORIS

"RECENT WORKS RAKU"

SEPT 10-OCT 20th 1983

DAVID NELSON

"RECENT WORKS
STONEWARE"

OCT 22-NOV 30th 1983

THE CLAY POT

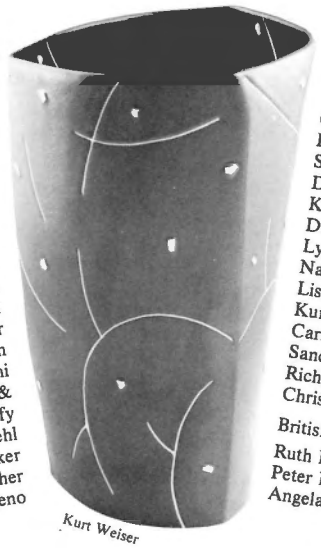
PARK SLOPE • BROOKLYN
162 7th AVE (212) 788-6564

Tenth Anniversary Exhibit

CLAY SPECTRUM

September 24 — October 29, 1983

Elaine Alt
Bennett Bean
Curtis & Suzan Benzle
Jerry Berta
Harriet Bellows
Olga Bravo
Regis Brodie
Harvey Brody
Sandra Byers
Molly Cowgill
David Davison
Maishe Dickman
Craig Easter
Sylvia Hyman
Ban Kajitani
Susan & Steven Kemenyffy
Linda Kuehl
Nancee Meeker
Don Pilcher
Donna Polseno



Kurt Weiser

Gayle Prunhaber
Ted Randall
Chris Richard
Harvey Sadow
Steven Schrepferman
David Shaner
Kathryn Sharbaugh
Dick Studley
Lynn Turner
Nancy Valk
Lisa Waters
Kurt Weiser
Carl Witkop
Sandra Wyner
Richard Zakin
Christine Zimmerman

British guest artists:
Ruth King
Peter Lane
Angela Verdun

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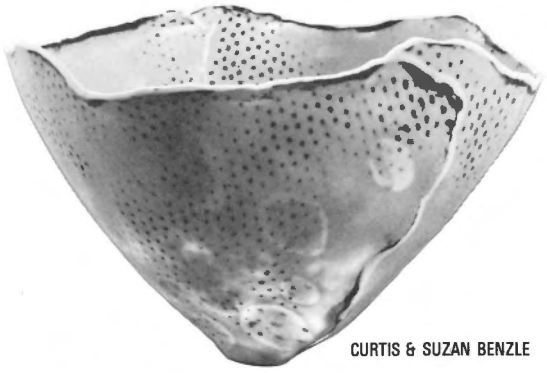
CAROLYN SALE
DOROTHY DUNITZ
July 16 - September 3

THOMAS HOADLEY
October 8 - October 29

CURTIS & SUZAN BENZLE
November 5 - November 26

BENNETT BEAN
December 10 - December 31



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a division of habarat galleries inc.

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Lathrup Village, Michigan
313/552-1151

LILL STREET GALLERY FALL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

(9-23) **John Parcher**
Earthen Wall and Relief – An installation
(18) Visiting Artists Lecture:
David Nelson and **Donna Polseno**
(30) **Opening – Chicago Vicinity Clay III**
A regional exhibition juried by Helen Williams Drutt

OCTOBER

(Thru 28) **Chicago Vicinity Clay III**
(8 & 9) Visiting Artist Workshop:
David Leach
(17, 24) **Contemporary American Ceramics: Four Perspectives**
(31, Nov. 7) A 4-part seminar bringing together Chicago galleries, collectors, critics, curators, and artists to examine the state of contemporary ceramic art
(29) **4th Annual Halloween Benefit**

LILL STREET GALLERY

For more information and registration, contact:
Lisa Youngner, 1021 West Lill, Chicago, 60614, (312) 248-4414

LAURA ANDRESON PORCELAIN

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SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 30

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310 E. OJAI AVENUE
OJAI, CA 93023
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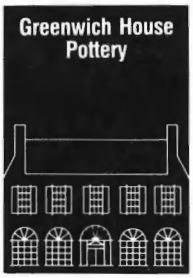
FALL 1983 – SPRING 1984

Low Fire— New Frontiers

EXHIBITIONS:	September 13-30	**Jane Gustin**
	October 4-21	**Aurore Chabot**
	Oct. 25 — Nov. 15	**Karon Doherty**
LECTURES: 7 PM	September 9	**Ron Nagle**
	September 30	**Susan Wechsler**
	October 14	**Aurore Chabot**
	November 4	**Karon Doherty**
WORKSHOP:	October 15	**Aurore Chabot**



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Craft Department
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$2850 IN PRIZES, AWARDS & COVERAGE IN ORNAMENT

Entry requests must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope. Competition closes December 31, 1983.

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1984

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APRIL 27-29, 1984

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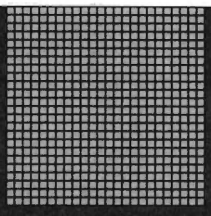
Due

October 10, 1983

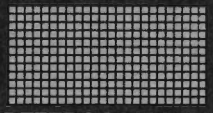


ANDREA GILL
September 17 & 18

WAYNE HIGBY
September 24

WILLIAM DALEY
October 22

JUN KANEKO
November 19 & 20



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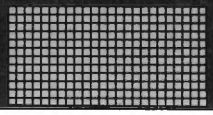

CLAY YEAR-ROUND '83-'84

Fall '83
PHIL CORNELIUS
DAN DOAK
GAYLE PRUNHUBER

Winter '84
BETTY WOODMAN
DAN DOAK
GAYLE PRUNHUBER

Spring '84
RICHARD WHITE
DENNIS EVANS
STEPHEN KAFER

Sun Valley Center
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(208)622-3539

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11-5 SATURDAY
and by appointment

New Works By:

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Elsa Rady
Betty Woodman

Exhibition: October 8 – 29

THE

RAW EDGE

CERAMICS OF THE 80's
CURATED BY SUSAN WECHSLER
OCTOBER 19-NOVEMBER 9

OPENING: OCTOBER 19, 7-9PM
Robert Brady • Viola Frey
Ann Gardner • Peter Gourfain
Ken Little • Michael Lucero
Kirk Mangus • Mark McCloud
Judy Moonelis • Terry Rosenberg
Arnold Zimmerman
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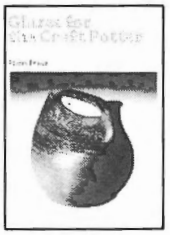
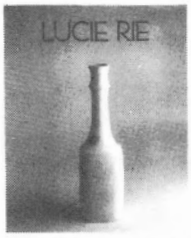
CW Post Center
Long Island University
Greenvale NY 11548
516 299 2788

special interest



B2GLZCR *Limited quantities*
Glazes For The Craft Potter, *Harry Fraser.* An invaluable text about glaze technology and practice. Glaze calculation, composition and application is considered at length. Further chapters deal with opacifiers, stains and coloring, binders, electrolytes and suspending agents. Fraser discusses the importance of health precautions when handling toxic materials. Further descriptions include pottery faults and their remedies, concluding with a large number of glaze recipes. Soft cover **$9.95**

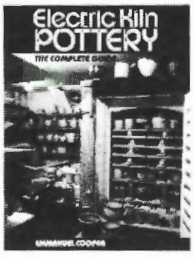


B2LUCIE
Lucie Rie, edited by *John Houston.* A major retrospective exhibition of Lucie Rie's ceramics shown at the Sainsbury Center, Norwich, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1981 and 1982. Beautifully illustrated, over 200 pots from more than 50 years of her career. **$20.00**

B2CHPTR
The Chinese Potter: A Practical History of Chinese Ceramics, *Margaret Medley.* Concerned with the technique of manufacture and the technological, geographical and historical conditions under which the wares of China were produced. Well illustrated. Soft cover. **$14.95**

B2RVIEW
The Ceramic Review Book of Clay Bodies and Glaze Recipes, edited by *Emmanuel Cooper and Eileen Lewenstein.* A collection of over 400 recipes from established potters throughout England and the US. Soft cover. **$6.95**

B2NOTEB
Pottery: A Notebook For New Potters, *Clayton-Morrison, Chare, Teller and Kaufman* for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. A step-by-step instruction booklet for making pottery at an introductory level. Informative and concise, this well illustrated book is an excellent resource for students and teachers. Soft cover. **$4.95**



B2ELECT
Electric Kiln Pottery: The Complete Guide, *Emmanuel Cooper.* Dealing comprehensively with the particular qualities of the electric kiln. Special areas of concentration are: kiln descriptions and information; firing; clays; glazes, glaze making and glaze application and decoration. **$24.95**

- U.S. mail orders under $15.00 include $1.50 postage and handling.
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additional locations

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cleveland, ohio
44113
(216) 241-4767

8 colonial avenue
wilmington,
delaware 19805
(302) 654-2344

rt. 8, box 36-A
raleigh,
north carolina
27612
(919) 782-1320

JAMES IRWIN

SEPTEMBER 21 – OCTOBER 15

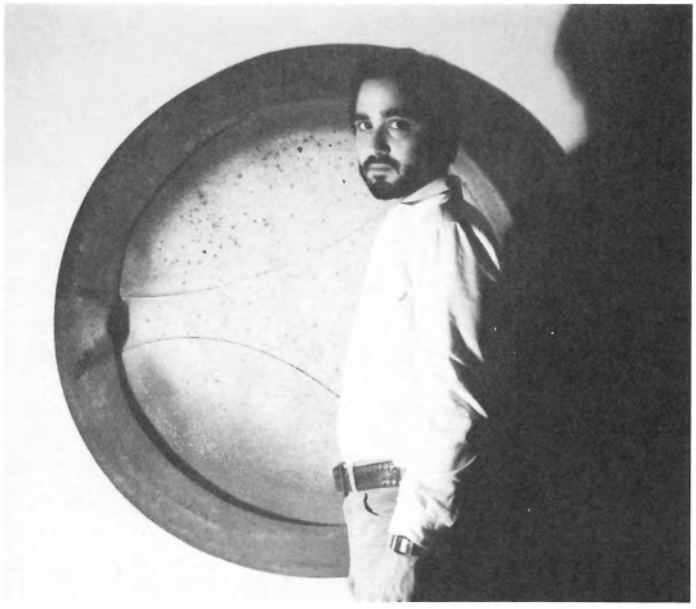
BURNISHED EARTHENWARE

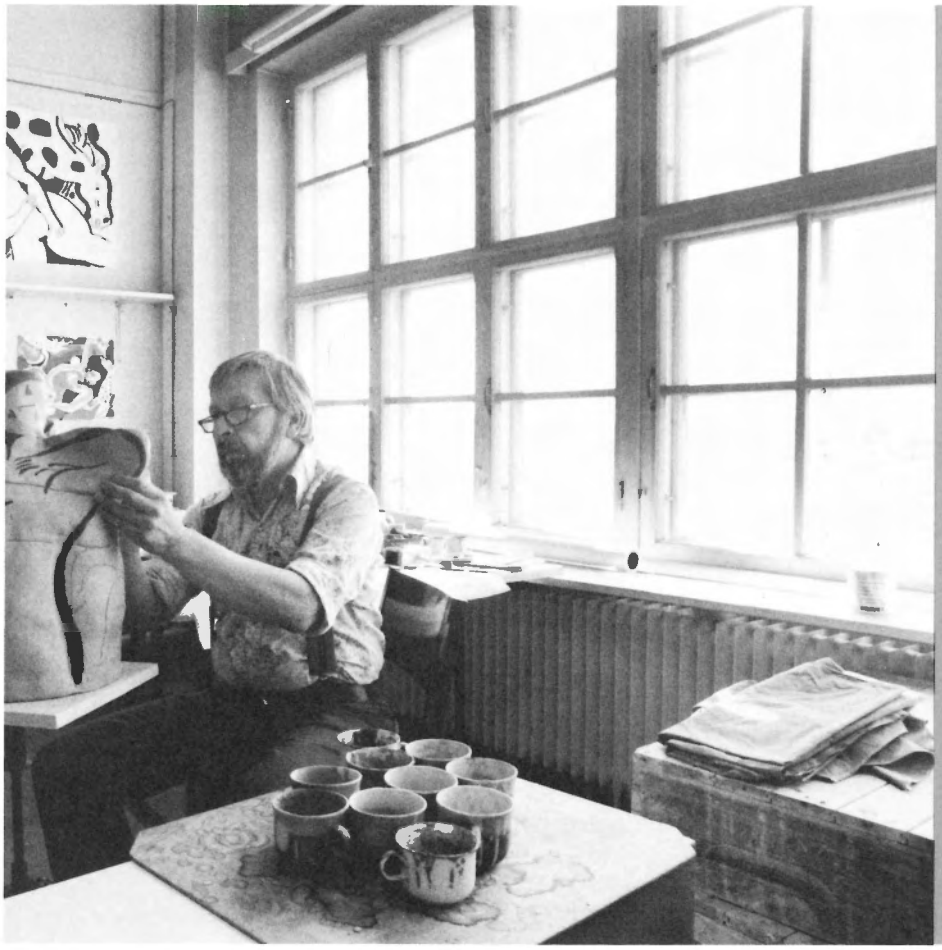
CONTEMPORARY ARTISANS GALLERY
530 BUSH STREET
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA 94108
415-981-4443

TETKOWSKI

NOVEMBER 4/DECEMBER 3

Netsky Gallery
5759 Sunset Drive
South Miami, Florida 33143
(305) 662-2453





Rudy Autio Retrospective

Organized by the University of Montana, Montana Historical Society and Yellowstone Art Center.

University of Montana
Missoula, Montana
October 10–November 23, 1983

Bellevue Art Museum
Bellevue, Washington
January 14–February 26, 1984

John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
March 25–June 3, 1984

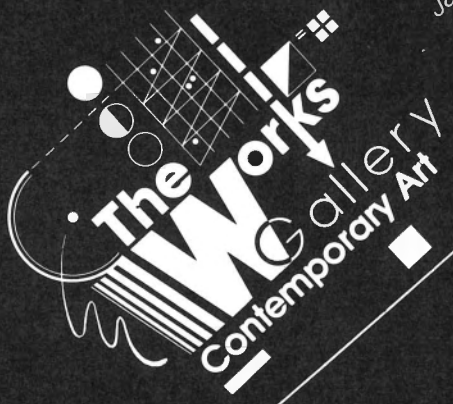
American Craft Museum
New York, New York
September 14–November 23, 1984

Catalog available, $8. ppd. from:
School of Fine Arts
University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812
406 243-4970

Artist in studio. Photo: Mauri Helenius Helsinki.

Contemporary Ceramics

Stanley Andersen
Bennett Bean
Olga Bravo
Harvey Brody
Mona Brooks
Marek Cecula
Jamie Davis



Rita Duvall
Steve Gamza
James Johnston
Susan Loftin
Charles Malin
Nancy Meeker

David Nelson
Ed O'Reilly
Mary Roehm
James Rothrock
David Snair
Laura Wilensky

319 South Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19147 (215) 922-7775 co-directors Rick & Ruth Snyderman

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DAVID GILHOOLY
CLAY
AUGUST 2-SEPTEMBER 3

HARVEY BRODY
CLAY
JAY MUSLER
GLASS
SEPTEMBER 7-OCTOBER 1

JUTA SAVAGE
CLAY
OCTOBER 4-29

SCOTT CHAMBERLIN
CLAY
NOVEMBER 1-26

Building A Fort Mason Center San Francisco, Ca. 94123 (415) 928-2119

Ron Nagle

September 10-October 1

Charles Cowles Gallery

Also representing:

Peter Voulkos
Michael Lucero

420 West Broadway New York 10012 (212) 925-3500

Patrick Siler
September

Inez Storer
October

Brian Longe
November

Quay

254 Sutter Street
San Francisco, California 94108

Raymon Elozua
September

Fredrick Eversley
October

Nell Sinton
November

Braunstein

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San Francisco, California 94108